







IN AND AROUND  
S T A M B O U L.

BY

MRS. EDMUND HORNBY.

"The European with the Asian shore  
Sprinkled with palaces : the ocean stream,  
Here and there studded with a seventy-four ;  
Sophia's cupola with golden gleam ;  
The cypress groves ; Olympus high and hoar ;  
The twelve isles, and more than I could dream,  
Far less describe, present the very view  
Which charmed the charming Mary Montagu."

BYRON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

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To the Memory

OF A GOOD AND KIND MAN,

THOMAS HORNBY, Esq.,

OF OAKFIELD, REIGATE,

These Letters,

MANY OF WHICH WERE WRITTEN FOR HIS AMUSEMENT IN ILLNESS,

ARE NOW DEDICATED,

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF LOVE AND REGARD.



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# IN AND AROUND STAMBoul.

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## LETTER I.

VOYAGE TO CALAIS.—JOURNEY TO PARIS.—ARRIVAL.—SOLDIERS.—FESTIVITIES.—JOURNEY TO MARSEILLES.—VALLEY OF THE RHONE.—THE ALPS.—AVIGNON.—EMBARK.—SCENE ON BOARD.—SISTERS OF CHARITY.—AN EVENING ON BOARD.

Paris, August 24th, 1855.

My dear Mother,

WE left London about half-past seven on Friday evening, and arrived at Dover at eleven. There, in the Basin, lay, with its huge red and white lights, the steamer which was to take us to Calais. It seemed to me an effort to plant myself on its deck, to be taken so far from Edith and you all. *Ma che sarà, sarà*; and it is as well to do it with a stout and thankful heart.

In a few minutes we were upon the broad sea. It was a lovely starlight night, with just breeze enough

to make the waves look beautiful. Almost all the ladies went down immediately into their cabins, but I seemed spell-bound to the deck, thinking over our long and uncertain journey, and saying to myself over and over again, "Farewell, England! God bless you, my dearest Edith!" whom I thought of as comfortably asleep at home.

The steamer went at a rapid rate, and soon the lights of Dover sank like a wreath of pale stars into the broad track of bright foam stretching far behind us. Still, to my comfort, the two brilliant ones on the cliff showed plainly, and still I could say that I saw England. Soon however Edmund pointed out the green lamps of Calais harbour; and in less time than we were in the 'Fairy,' on the last sail we took together, we found ourselves across the Channel. The tide was low, so we signalled for boats, and had some time to wait. While walking up and down the deck, I could distinctly see the sea-lights of Dover, and thought how ridiculous it is, in these days of steam, to fret oneself about distance. Presently boats dashed up, manned by fine strong fellows; and a different language was very striking to one's ear. It seems so extraordinary that so pleasant a two hours on a starlight sea, and with England positively in view, can bring you to so different a people.

We had a delightful run on shore, the men singing

cheerily, as they raced with the other boats. We soon gained the Pier, where the ladies were politely handed out by the gravest of moustachioed Frenchmen, lantern in hand, wrapped in an immense cloak, and looking as if the fate of the whole world depended upon himself.

After showing passports, etc. we adjourned to the station, where we were fortunate enough to meet Captain Wright, one of the Queen's Foreign Service Messengers. He had lived for some time at Constantinople, and, as we sipped our coffee together, gave us some very pleasant chat about it.

At three o'clock in the morning we started for Paris. Our talk soon became rather drowsy, and I was so tired, and the carriage so deliciously comfortable, that when I awoke from a most refreshing sleep, dawn was peeping under the blinds.

Presently I looked out upon the corn standing in rich sheaves—a splendid harvest. Soon the country-people began to appear; their pretty dresses, and the gay trappings of their horses, making the cornfields quite a picture. Then the sun burst out over many villages and towns, and we felt like poor tired owls in the bright daylight on arriving at Paris.

Nothing can exceed the splendour and gaiety of the place at this moment. The flags and triumphal arches of the Queen's visit still remain; the people are flock-

ing in crowds to the “Exposition;” splendid bodies of troops marching hither and thither through the streets, and bands playing in every direction. Temples in the Champs Élysées are illuminated every evening, and filled with musicians. Everything to amuse and delight the people. We have just passed General Canrobert, mounted on a white charger, and surrounded by a brilliant staff, returning from escorting the Queen to St. Cloud. He was much cheered, and bowed good-naturedly to all.

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We arrived at Marseilles on the evening of the 29th of August. We had been charmed throughout the whole day’s journey with the wonderful beauty of the Valley of the Rhone. There you have everything to delight the eye at once: vineyards, mountains, valleys, meadows, gardens, old castles and towers, savage heath-land, and the loveliest cultivation glowing with purple grapes, melons, peaches, and Indian corn; the happiest and most picturesque-looking peasantry in the world; and the glorious river, with its little islands of snow-white mountain-sand, winding brightly through all.

Then the Alps at sunset, shining in their snow, far above the drifting rose-coloured clouds which hung on the dark pine-woods—nestling as it were here and

there in their vast solitudes : it is impossible to describe one's feelings of awe and delight on first beholding them.

We dined at Avignon. The heat of the day had been intense ; and with exclamations of joy the thirsty tired passengers of a long train rushed into the station dining-room. A long table was spread in a large cool room, with sweet garden-flowers peeping in at each open window,—the most delicious peaches and grapes, figs and melons, in baskets trimmed with leaves and roses, all down the table. I thought that even Petrarch, ever so much in love, must have one day eaten such as these with some complacency.

Excellent soup, fish, partridges, and other delicacies were served us in the promptest manner ; and refreshed and merry, we rushed to our steaming monster again, and left Avignon with grateful hearts.

It soon became dusk, and was quite dark long before the train arrived at Marseilles ; but by an occasional glimpse, I thought the coast looked very fine. In the carriage with us was a good-looking young Frenchman, “got up” in the most exquisite style, who had travelled from Marseilles and back again, just for the chance of getting a peep at the Queen of England in the streets of Paris !

We rested comfortably for the night in an excellent hotel at Marseilles ; and after breakfast the next morn-

ing, with many kind adieus and many a wish of *Bon voyage* from our host and fellow travellers, we started in a little open carriage (with a merry ring of bells to the horses' collars) for the ship. The harbour is enormous, and crowded with ships of all nations. Our guide quickly discovered the 'Simois,' a fine screw steamer, lying alongside with her steam up. The crowd was very great: sailors, soldiers, and a motley collection of many nations it seemed, bustling about with a tremendous amount of noise and shouting in various languages.

The heat was intense, the dust extremely painful, and I looked through forests of masts, with longing eyes at the sea.

It was a scene of the greatest confusion on deck. Troops bound for the Crimea were being hurried to the fore-part of the vessel. The hold was open, its vast recesses half filled with huge packages addressed to Miss Nightingale at Scutari, and to the Army in the East generally. Immense quantities of baggage were being added every moment; horses were being stalled on deck; and people making hasty farewells. However, all was finished at last; and, as the ship steamed slowly out of harbour, we sat down to the breakfast, and took a survey of our fellow-passengers. The heat was still so overpowering that we were soon glad to get on deck again. The first group that struck

us there was a party of Sisters of Charity, three young, and two elderly ones. The steamer was going at a rapid rate, and the fine, many-coloured cliffs of France already becoming indistinct. When they could be seen no longer, the poor young Nuns, leaning against the side of the vessel, covered their faces and cried bitterly. Their Superiors (who wore massive golden crucifixes round their necks) consoled them most kindly, and kept frequently saying, "Courage, my children!"

The fore-part of the vessel was crowded with French soldiers,—mostly fine, sturdy-looking young fellows, few, I should think, much above twenty.

Many of them seemed greatly depressed; but it was really quite a lesson to see how cheerfully they put up with every discomfort, and how kind and obliging they seemed to one another,—and this we noticed throughout the voyage.

We enjoyed our first evening's walk on deck extremely. Who can describe the lovely blue of the Mediterranean? The sunset had been very fine, and as there is but little or no twilight, the innumerable stars seemed to gleam out suddenly in the clear grey light, mingling sea and sky. Not a sail was to be seen, and we were running before a fresh gale.

As the night grew darker, we watched, by the side of the vessel, the beautiful star-shaped phosphorescent

lights, flying fast through the foam with the prettiest effect possible. These "glowworms of the sea," as they are sometimes called, abound on fine calm nights. We thought of you all in England as the ship sped on in this lovely sea.

The bells, fore and aft, striking the hour, sounded very sweetly, and the deck began to get quiet.

The poor Crimean soldiers were making up their rough beds for the night; for the dew began to fall heavily. The nuns crept softly and sorrowfully below, poor things!

Every one seemed tired and weary with the heat and bustle of the day. Edmund stayed to smoke a cigar, while I, disregarding the charms of tea without milk, and fresh-gathered lemons, was soon disposed of comfortably in my berth, not feeling certain in my own mind, as I drew its tiny white curtains, whether it was really true that we were lying down to sleep on the fair but treacherous waters of the Mediterranean; and *really true* moreover that we were on our way to the far-famed city of the East—Constantinople.

## LETTER II.

A NIGHT AT SEA.—PARTY OF NUNS.—FELLOW-PASSENGERS.—  
CORSICA.—MUSIC ON BOARD.

My dear Mother,

I SLEPT well on our first night on board the 'Simois,' only waking now and then to hear the good ship working steadily and bravely on. At sea, in the dark hours of night, one thinks of the many lives resting entirely on the vigilance and skill of those who watch and work that complicated machinery.

We were early on deck. No one could be much disposed to laziness in fine weather on this most lovely Mediterranean—its blue waves and glittering white spray dancing in the morning sun. The poor soldiers, looking pale and cold from the night air and heavy dew to which they had been exposed, were packing up their trifle of bedding, and marching off to breakfast. The Nuns were sitting in their old place by the side of the vessel; the elder ones reading their books of devotion, as calm and serene as usual

—the younger ones watching the bright waves, and looking a little less wretched than on the evening before.

I thought at first that they must be going to the Crimea, and wondered at their great depression, with so much usefulness before them ; but when I heard what was their dreary destination, I was no longer surprised. Two were being sent to a small French settlement in Algiers, almost in the Desert ; and in all human probability would never see France or their friends again. They had left the most beautiful part of the Valley of the Rhone ; and there was a crowd, we were told, at the little village station to say adieu, with many tears on both sides. How often we have thought of these poor Nuns, and wondered how they got on among the savage Algerines whom they are sent to convert !

At breakfast we began to see and know a little more of our fellow-passengers. (I write these details, thinking that it may amuse you for half an hour to read a rough sketch of a voyage eastward.) There was a French lady and her daughter going to join “ Papa ” at Scutari ; Mr. Moore, Queen’s Messenger, who, curiously enough, had travelled the same way twenty-five years ago with my father, and lived with him for a month at Constantinople ; Mr. Newall, an engineer, going out to lay down an electric telegraph from Varna

to Therapia (which they say is greatly needed during the war) ; his brother-in-law, Mr. Bell, bound on the same route, for amusement and sketching ; and Herr S——, who travelled for some months every autumn, saw everything, and made friends with every one worth knowing ; an extremely handsome young Greek, returning to Athens from England, who spoke to every one in their own language with the marvellous fluency of his race ; and a most melancholy French officer, in command of the troops on board, who spoke to no one,—makes up the list of the first-class passengers ; and we thought ourselves most fortunate, not only to meet with agreeable people, but also with so *few* of them, as the mail-boats are usually crowded since the war began. The weather too was glorious ; such a delicious breeze, such a blue sea and sparkling foam, such a sky ! We had a nice awning on deck, which fluttered merrily in the wind. The soldiers below seemed to enjoy basking in the sun. White sails gleamed here and there around us, and it seemed as if we must be making a royal voyage of pleasure in some enchanted sea,—it is so very beautiful, this many-coloured Mediterranean.

So here we are to spend one morning, we little herd of first-class passengers.

The Nuns (second class) are seated on some bales on the quarter-deck below. The youngest is crying

bitterly again, and rests her poor head on the breast of one of the elder “sisters.” There is a great difference in the look of the two “Superiors.” One of them has a fine face, but exactly as if carved out of stone,—bloodless, almost immovable. It is easy to see that *she* has done with this world’s affections. She is mild and serene, and does not strain her eyes with anguish towards France,—they look calmly everywhere, but generally on her book.

The other Superior is a dear, motherly-looking woman,—comely still, and rather stout. She must have been very pretty. A colour still lingers on her cheek; and there are tears in her soft brown eyes, which *could* sparkle very merrily. It is on *her* breast that the poor young nun leans so despondingly. I point out to Edmund (who is chatting to Herr S—about their favourite Germany) the group of second-class passengers below; they also have an awning, and are enjoying, each after his own fashion, the delicious, breezy day. The lieutenant of the troops is there—a very amiable-looking, fine young fellow. On his knee is perched a little boy of seven, in scarlet trousers and large white pinafore. His mother is a delicate, sad-looking little lady. They are going to join her husband in the Crimea; and the young lieutenant takes quite chivalrous care of his friend’s wife and child. We watch him patiently trying to teach the

spoiled little boy to read ; but he soon escapes, and darts off to the Nuns; and a kindly acquaintance begins between the two parties from that moment, in which even the most desponding Nun joins at last. Of our party above, the French lady is knitting. I have given up my book to Mademoiselle Lucie, who discusses it with one of her wide trousers twisted round one of the legs of her camp-stool, and one of her long plaits of hair round the other. Mr. Bell is trying to get a sketch of a distant yacht, but it bounds away too quickly. The handsome young Greek is deep in a novel, the breeze playing riotously in his dark hair. The melancholy French officer, after fondly patting his poor sick chargers stalled on deck, has again disappeared. Mr. Newall is looking through his glass at a distant ship, which is sailing dreamily away into the blue sky.

The bells, fore and aft, chime an hour past noon. The sun is very hot, and the breeze fallen so much that scarcely a breath stirs the awning as the vessel works onwards. Every now and then a heated blast comes up from the boilers, which catches your breath and gives you a sickening idea of the "Inferno." I at last disappear for a siesta, and pass through the deck cabin : there repose, full length on the morocco cushions, the tired Queen's Messenger ; his book has fallen down ; he looks pale—and patient. What a

life it has been during the war! A young soldier brought me a glass of cool lemonade: he was still suffering from two very severe wounds received at the Alma, but preferred doing what he could on board the 'Simois' to remaining in the hospital at Scutari. He was only eighteen, he told us, and had been out since the commencement of the war. Such a pretty, gentle boy! We quite grew to like him, and his patient, quiet ways. *He* certainly did not seem to be made of the stuff to kill. What a horrible necessity is war!

The ceaseless beat of a screw, and the noise of many feet overhead, are not very great incentives to sleep on a sultry sofa; while the sun positively blisters the paint. I try to read 'Evangeline,' but it is too dreadful even to think of the cool, shady forests of Acadia in that scorching heat! If *I* suffer in one of the best cabins, what must it be for the poor soldiers on deck! Two of them have their wives with them,—very quiet, patient women. I often see them washing their own gowns or their husbands' shirts as well as they can, after dark. *These* are going uncomplainingly to suffering—perhaps to death.

Presently Mr. Bell called to us, and we heard the word "Corsica." "To pass Corsica, and asleep!" we exclaimed; and rushed on deck. Yes, there, rising

abruptly out of the dark blue waters, were the stern-looking rocks of Corsica, upon which every eye was fixed, even to the timid ones of the Nuns.

Very solitary and grand, it looks a fitting birth-place for its hero. Not a sail was near, and, from the ship, no sign of man or human habitation,—only, as I said, the many-coloured rocks, rising sternly and abruptly out of the sea ; over these two large birds were soaring, which Mr. Bell tried to convince me were eagles, but I could not help confessing they were too small to claim that honourable name.

And now, on our left, appeared the violet-tinted mountains of Sardinia, coasted by rocks of every shade, from dazzling white to deepest green ; throwing as deep a shadow on the clear water beneath them. The wild “white horses” rushed in to be tamed and still among these lovely shadows, except here and there against some particularly sharp point, where you saw their snowy crests furiously raging up the rugged regardless rock. I shall never forget the extraordinary beauty of the Mediterranean *summer colouring* of sea and sky and rocks ; with the *violet mist* of mountains and islands in the distance, and the beautiful white sea-birds slowly flying by. On went our good ship through the dark blue waters : it still seemed a royal trip of pleasure on an enchanted sea. Far up in the distant mountains of Sicily we

sometimes saw a white Italian villa glittering in the sunshine, and wondered who lived in that beautiful and solitary place. Now and then, in a creek or sheltered nook, appeared a small village with its wreathing smoke (perhaps of myrtle-wood), and vineyards and gardens, which we made out with our glasses.

We frequently passed in the distance the pretty sailing-boats of the Mediterranean, with their white sails set, and darting along the coast, the very things of life and liberty. Small birds often perched on the rigging of our vessel, and after resting and pluming their little wings, flew away again.

Every one enjoyed the deck beyond measure when night came round again with its refreshing breezes. Again the foam made by the vessel glittered like myriads of golden phantom-stars flying past us. The stars above were almost as numerous, but looked down calm and large through the lofty ropes of the ship.

In these latitudes the Milky Way is much more distinctly visible than in England, and the southern constellations are wonderfully beautiful. Mr. Newall gave me several pleasant lessons in astronomy on these quiet evenings,—but the heavy dew soon drove prudent people below. Sometimes we passed a soldier fast asleep as we went down, and I placed lightly on his folded arms a fine peach, or bunch of grapes,

which no doubt surprised him when he awoke. But it was often too sultry to think of going early to one's berth, so Mademoiselle Lucie and I had recourse to the pianoforte in the ladies' cabin. How delighted the soldiers and sailors were with our songs! Edmund came in laughing, to bid us look up at the crowd of sunburnt faces hanging over the open skylight of the saloon.

What a motley group it was! When we played dance music, one of the soldiers accompanied us admirably well with his castanets. The conclusion of each performance was followed by a peal of applause from our laughing friends in the saloon. Then came "*La Suisse au bord du Lac*," which elicited loud murmurs of delight from the Frenchmen, especially at the chorus of "*Oh ma patrie!*" And lastly they were brought to the highest state of enthusiasm by "*Partant pour la Syrie*."

So usually ended our evening. Nothing remained but quiet thoughts of you all at home, and to confide ourselves through the dark hours of night to One who watches over all, both on sea and land.

## LETTER III.

ARRIVAL AT MALTA.—SUNDAY MORNING.—RAMBLE THROUGH MALTA.—FEAST AND CHURCH OF ST. JOHN.—HARBOUR OF VALETTA.—RETURN ON BOARD.—“THE ISLES OF GREECE.”—CAPES MATAFAN AND ST. ANGELO.

Malta, Sunday.

My dear Mother,

At six o'clock in the morning I was startled from a sound sleep by a tremendous noise. “It's only the anchor dropping,” said a drowsy voice from the opposite berth. “*Land?* where are we then?”—“At Malta.”

I climbed upon the sofa, and looked through a port-hole. The sea was dancing in huge blue waves, and the morning could not be more bright and splendid. The quiet of the vessel at anchor was very pleasant, after the ceaseless noise of the engines, which had been sounding in one's ears night and day for so long. Even the poor cocks and hens on board began to crow and cackle with satisfaction at the change. Our ship was thronged with gaily-painted Maltese

boats, laden with grapes and melons, which the soldiers on deck were eagerly buying, and pulling up in small wooden buckets tied to a stout rope. The sea heaved and danced in a most inconvenient way for these commercial transactions ; and the confusion of French tongues above, and of loud and voluble Italian below, was most amusing to listen to.

I could not help laughing at the advantage which the soldiers had in a dispute as to the price of fruit which had been already hauled up. The sea was so rough that the expostulating Maltese could hardly keep their legs in the boats, and their customers above had only to threaten to let go the rope to put an end to the altercation at once. However, they behaved very well, and the storm soon quietly settled down to a friendly push off, and nod of adieu. The Maltese have become comparatively rich since the war broke out ; selling all their wares, from melons to gold and silver crosses, and lace and cameo brooches to little white lion-dogs, at a very high price to eager customers.

It was Sunday morning when we arrived at Malta. By seven o'clock I was sitting on deck. The bells of many churches were ringing to prayers. They sounded very sweetly over the sea ; and the nuns, standing in their old place, looking over the side of the vessel, seemed especially to delight in listening to them.

Perhaps it reminded them of old days in the Valley of the Rhone, where bells are ever sounding so musically through the gardens and vineyards of the villages.

We were anchored in the smaller harbour of Malta, appropriated entirely to the French during the war. It was crowded with ships of all sizes. It is such a terrible place for glare that I have but a confused notion of long rows of white stone buildings rising suddenly out of the sea; a sentinel pacing up and down, on a narrow white causeway before me; and a shrivelled fig-tree, powdered with white dust, and looking very hot, growing against the hot white walls. However I managed to make out a few scorched olive-trees on the hard-baked hills above.

Our breakfast-table was covered with Maltese produce: magnificent peaches and green figs (which spoke of shady gardens *somewhere*); delicious red mullet; and many-coloured, gaping cockles for those who liked them. Then jumping into a pink and yellow boat, with a beak at each end, we rowed to see the town and the great harbour of Valetta.

Mrs. Austin had kindly given us two letters to friends of hers; but they were in the *hold*, under a mass of baggage, with our books for the voyage, *life-preservers*, and other things which we wanted every moment. What a pity that it is not more

generally known that travellers are seldom allowed more than one small portmanteau or carpet-bag in their cabin !

But to return to our ramble at Malta. We landed on a white stone quay, and toiled up a long flight of hot white stone steps, lined with beggars, sailor-boys, and waifs and strays of all nations. Then we followed our guide into a narrow, crowded street, where groups of black-eyed women and children were huddled together by their open doors, basking in the sun, and looking curiously at the strangers. Men, with baskets of melons, were noisily pushing along the broken and dirty pavement ; and boys with beautiful flowers pressed you to buy, in strange, harsh-sounding Italian. The children seem to flourish wonderfully, basking in their picturesque rags at the door, disputing the sunniest piece of dirt with numerous kittens and curs of low degree.

Almost every house had its birdcages. The Maltese are famous for their breed of canaries. We soon arrived at some of the principal streets,—very steep hills of narrow white houses, with carved and irregular Italian balconies filled with flowers and shrubs. We met many ladies hastening to church, all dressed in rich black silk, with a mantilla just like a black silk petticoat gathered into a band, and held prettily over the head. It falls over the shoulders very grace-

fully ; and eyes as black as night sparkle beneath it most effectively. I must say that an air of coquettish devotion (if I may use the expression) strikes one at Malta, as much in the ladies, as in the rich-robed, sleek-looking priests, who pace the streets with an appearance of great satisfaction.

It was the Feast of St. John, and we went to the service in the church of that name, built by the Knights of Malta. All the rare old tapestry illustrative of the life of our Saviour was exposed to public view. We were struck with the singular brilliancy of its colours (particularly the fine ultramarine blue) after the lapse of so many ages.

The floor of the church is a rich mosaic, each compartment being the monument of a knight. One might well spend hours here ; but when we entered, Mass was being sung, and we were too much impressed with its solemnity to search even for Caravaggio's fine picture. There were no "family seats," no "respectable pews," with luxuriously-stuffed cushions and rows of gilt-leaved books, in this grand old church. Only many rows of rough wooden chairs by the arched columns on either side, where all either knelt, or sat and listened, as they liked,—from the graceful Maltese lady in her rich sweeping silks, to the wildest-looking sailor, with bare feet and patched jacket. There were many who seemed wanderers and

outcasts upon the face of the earth—so wild-looking as to have lost almost all trace of humanity.

There were many lonely, desolate-looking people—many friendless wanderers from many lands. To us all it was a most impressive service; gathered on shore again as we were, safe from the sea, in this most interesting and beautiful church.

I was particularly struck with one Maltese sailor, whose matted hair and beard, and bronzed bare feet, stood out in strong relief from one of the columns, at the foot of which he knelt with two young boys as savage and neglected-looking as himself. He prayed and crossed himself with the greatest intensity, only turning round once to make his ragged boys kneel too. It was very touching to see his rough but earnest teaching. Two little beggar-girls, weather-beaten and thin, entered alone, and sat down fearlessly on the marble steps close to the richly-robed priests.

Many in this strange assembly groaned audibly, and tears poured down many a sunburnt face. It is impossible not to be struck with the outward devotion of Southern people. The porch of the church was crowded with beggars; dogs waiting for their masters; and sellers of fruit and flowers, who had put down their baskets to pray and cross themselves most devoutly for a few minutes within sound of the organ and then to go laughing and shouting on their way.

We greatly enjoyed our row back to the 'Simois.' The grand harbour of Valetta is a very fine sight just now, crowded as it is with ships of war. Gaily-painted boats, rowed by swarthy Maltese, dart about in all directions. The boatmen's boys seemed to me the most saucy and independent little fellows in the world. We saw many of these black-eyed, curly-headed young brigands rocking about in the most unconcerned manner in that turbulent sea,—a shout for every passer-by, always ready, and a merry indifference as to whether their oars were in the water or out of it. Some of them were fishing off the rocks. The water, of wonderful clearness here, reflects the dark green and purple seaweed growing on them in the most beautiful manner.

Malta, with its steep white rocks and fortifications all round, and cannon bristling in every direction, certainly gives one an imposing idea of the home of the Knights of St. John in their palmy days. The heat and glare is certainly terrible. If it were not for the sea-breeze, one would be soon scorched up like an olive-leaf. How I pitied the poor "coalers," toiling up the sides of our great steam-transports!

It is a curious thing to see a boat-load of twenty or thirty of these men leaving a ship. They are so black from coal-dust that you cannot distinguish features, and they look more like a crew of evil

spirits than anything else, dancing on the bright blue waves.

We found some new passengers on our return to the ship. A Greek lady and her daughter—both singularly handsome; the mother wearing rich plaits of hair bound round a scarlet fez; the daughter, alas! although cast in the most exquisite mould of classic Greek beauty of face and form, dressed in the last French fashion. One seemed perfectly to remember having seen her in rarely draped white marble in some hall or studio, or on some friend's mantelpiece.

Our deck passengers were a wild-looking young Maltese and his wife, going to Constantinople to sell their canaries, of which they had seventy-five in a large wicker cage. These hardy travellers brought nothing more for their many days' journey than a few melons, and several loaves of coarse brown bread. It was charming to have the bright merry little canaries on board. Mademoiselle Lucie and I used to take them cool grapes to peck at, and the lame young soldier constantly brought them fresh water. Their dark mistress, with her heavy gold earrings and matted black hair, was generally stretched fast asleep upon one of her bundles; her bare brown legs appearing equally indifferent to the regards of the sun, or of the numerous passers-by.

We did not sit long at dinner today, for it was a

magnificent sunset, and we all wished to see Malta rapidly disappearing in the golden light, which was a beautiful sight. The young Greek lady was a great addition to our evening walk on deck. She was a most charming coquette, quite of the modern school, notwithstanding the antique cast of her beauty, and had all her admirers' names, written by themselves, with couplets expressing the completest devotion, upon each of the large folds of her fan. She laughed like a merry child when I asked her how many more would be added before she left the ship. Pretty graceful A—— ! she was most like a spoiled child after all, and even the Nuns soon learned to smile on her.

The day after leaving Malta we were among "the isles of Greece." The weather was still most lovely ; the sea a deep, deep blue. Mr. Bell took sketches in water-colours all day long. Even the melancholy French officer was charmed ; the Nuns put down their books, and the soldiers clustered to the sides of the vessel. Herr S—— read enthusiastically, in broken English, Byron's fine stanzas :—

"The isles of Greece ! the isles of Greece !  
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,  
Where grew the arts of war and peace,  
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung !  
Eternal summer gilds them yet ;  
But all except their sun is set !"

The great truth and force of Byron's descriptions

strike one very much on visiting places described by him.

Mr. Bell made an excellent sketch of Cape Matapan and its many-coloured rocks. Our grave, black-bearded Maltese pilot told us that it was very well to laugh while passing it in fair weather, but that a stiff breeze would make it quite a different thing. In the olden time, learned Herr S—— informed us, Greek sailors used to hang up a votive tablet to the deities after having made this stormy headland in safety.

At Cape St. Angelo we made out plainly, by the help of our glasses, a rude hut, on a steep and barren slope of rock, on which one would think that a goat could hardly climb with safety. Here another learned person of our party mentioned the temple of Apollo, which Lady M. W. Montague had informed him, in her charming way, had once stood on those very rocks;—but here *now* resides a hermit, who often hoists a little petitioning flag to ships passing by, hoping that they may take pity on his most solitary condition, and put off a boat with a present of biscuit, etc. etc. He did not do so to us however; and we all declared that he must have caught a glimpse of our fair Greek's fine eyes, which he, as a respectable and consistent recluse, could not be expected to brave. People are not always as merry as we were in passing Capes Matapan and St. Angelo.

But the pleasantest as well as the most sorrowful days must have an end ; and when we arrived and cast anchor at Syra, the Greek ladies were to leave us. We parted, with many hopes of meeting again in England. The sea was very rough, and it was with great difficulty that they got into the little Greek boat dancing below. Sad to say, just as Mr. A—— was mustering up courage to make an impressive as well as a tender adieu, a cruel signal was given to let go the rope, and a remorseless wave tore the little bark away as the first sentence was trembling on his lips.

## LETTER IV.

SYRA.—A GREEK HOSTELRY.—PIRATES.—EVENING.—SMYRNA.—THE BAZAARS.—RAMBLE THROUGH THE CITY.—THE CHURCH.—THE SLAVE-MARKET.—THE BASHI-BAZOUKS.—GALLIPOLI.—THE DARDANELLES.—APPROACH TO CONSTANTINOPLE.—THE BOSPHORUS.—LANDING.

Constantinople, September 8th, 1855.

My dear Mother,

SYRA, as seen from the sea, seemed to be little more than a barren pile of rocks, with a few olive-gardens and fig-trees scattered here and there. Mr. Bell made an excellent sketch of its beautiful harbour of St. George, with the hills of Tino and Myconi.

The town is built upon steep-piled rocks. A ruined castle, of evidently great antiquity and once formidable strength, crowns the topmost ridge, and beneath it houses cluster thickly on each side down to the water's edge, where their many bright colours and Eastern irregularity of outline are beautifully reflected in the dark blue waves.

Our ship was, as usual, surrounded with Greek boat-loads of fruit and vegetables. An old Greek, with a fine white beard which would have graced Nestor himself, particularly struck me. He was selling the little purple wild pigeon, for which Syra is noted, to our *maitre d'hôtel*; while a brigand-looking young fellow at his side was recommending his baskets of shell-fish with an eloquence worthy of a Grecian orator. There is certainly much grace and beauty still lingering among the Greeks, if nothing more.

Herr S—— and Mr. Bell returned to the ship after a ramble of some hours, having climbed to the very summit of Syra. They declared themselves to be amply repaid for the excessive heat and fatigue by the lovely view which they had obtained of islands studding the sea like a constellation of stars in the sky, which produces a most beautiful effect, backed by the undulating outlines of the surrounding mountains. I am told that none of these islands are beautiful in themselves, being merely groups of barren rocks, with a patch of cultivation here and there.

No breakfast could be got by our hungry friends at Syra. The Greek master of a miserable pile of wood, called an inn, coolly informed them, in bad Italian, that *he had breakfasted long ago!*

"Do you mean to say, then, that we cannot even get a cup of coffee?" said the indignant artist.

"I don't think you can," replied the "host," pulling on his slipper with a yawn.

After leaving Syra, we came in sight of rocks and mountains wilder-looking than ever, with most piratical, half castle- half house-like dwellings, perched every here and there, mostly about their almost inaccessible summits. Even in these days it is not safe for merchant-vessels to pass this place unprotected; and the mails do not disdain to carry a few muskets and cutlasses in case of a visit from Greek pirates, whose mysterious-looking craft are constantly seen lurking about the rocks, or dashing at a rapid rate along the coast.

You would greatly admire the picturesque Greek boats, or rather feluccas. Their prow is shaped like the breast of a huge bird, the long neck elaborately carved and ornamented. One constantly thinks of the vessels in which Jason set sail in search of the Golden Fleece.

Still the evenings were most beautiful, a fresh gale usually springing up after sunset; and as the stars came suddenly out, it was charming to watch sea and sky mingle in a soft violet shade, with a faint outline of the mountains all around us. I used to love to listen then to the Nuns' quiet talk, and sometimes to the pretty French airs whistled by the soldiers, poor fellows! as they paced the deck.

We arrived early in the morning at Smyrna, landed, and had a long ramble. The bay is very fine, and on the summit of the hills above are the ruins of a fine old castle. The first thing we met in the narrow streets was a long train of camels, and were charmed with the jingle of their bells, as they brought in heavy loads of grapes and figs from the country. The team was led by a brisk, dapper-looking little donkey, gaily caparisoned, who picked his way carefully over the wretched pavement, which reminds one, by the bye, more of a stable-yard in ruins (if you can fancy that) than anything else. The Turks seemed very much astonished, to say the least of it, to see me walking along at such a rate with a party of men.

Then we strolled into the bazaars—such a striking scene! Veiled Turkish ladies,—some on foot, attended by black slaves; others in a kind of Cinderella's pumpkin carriage, and carrying fans of peacocks' feathers in their hands; noisy Greeks in richly-embroidered vests, with silver-mounted yataghans in scarfs round their waists; stately old Turks, smoking quietly in their little shops, with their yellow slippers by their side; grave-looking Armenians; hideous Nubian slaves; camel-drivers; hungry-looking dogs; strings of heavily-laden donkeys; coffee-bearers; fruit-sellers; sellers of lemonade and sherbet, tinkling their glasses as they pass rapidly along; Greek boys, rush-

ing by with little pieces of lighted charcoal for the smokers; English and French soldiers and sailors; nondescripts of all nations bustling along through a *kennel*, about six feet wide, roofed over with canvas and old vines. It is a sight which, when seen for the first time, seems the most extraordinary one imaginable.

Passing under an ancient gateway of the town soon after, our dragoman told us, with great gravity, that had we but arrived the day before, we should have had the satisfaction of seeing the head of a brigand nailed to one of the beams, which had been exposed there for some time. We should have been much better pleased to have explored the many remains of antiquity which are still to be seen behind the town—fragments of the ancient city and acropolis, and famous temple of Cybele.

We spent some time in the church—one of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor. It is decorated in the usual gaudy style of the Greeks: frightful pictures of saints with silver hands and “glories;” plenty of artificial flowers twined round huge waxen tapers, and innumerable glass chandeliers with trumpery coloured pendants. It was sad to see so ancient and interesting a church so much disfigured.

We then looked at the fine white-marble fountain of the town, where groups of tired camels and their picturesque-looking drivers had stopped to rest. Here,

for the first time, we heard a muezzin call out to prayer from a neighbouring lofty minaret.

Passing onward through the narrow streets, our guide conducted us under a low, dark archway. This led into a sort of yard, with rickety wooden buildings all around,—and this was the Slave-Market. Such a sad, humiliating sight! There were only about a dozen blacks to sell, mostly women; and several had little children or babies in their arms. I thought they looked cheerful, and very much at home with their Turkish master, with the exception of one poor creature who sat aloof from the rest, the image of sullen despair. I gave her a peach which I had in my basket, and a little piece of money. She took hold of my hand and said something which I could not understand. Poor soul! my heart could only ache for her.

Another woman called me “dama Inglese,” and pointed to her baby imploringly. This quite knocked me up, for it was a pretty, soft-eyed little thing, and looked very delicate; so we gave them a few pieces of money and made a precipitate retreat; for it was too dreadful, and we were glad to get back to the ship.

We found two heavily chained Bashi-Bazouks on deck, who were being sent back to Constantinople, where they had committed some horrid murder. They were frightfully savage-looking fellows, black Arabs,

and by no means a pleasing addition to our freight. There was no more music after these wretched prisoners came on board.

We stopped once more at Gallipoli : the same picturesque-looking place from the sea as Syra, but miserable within, as only an Eastern town can be. There a detachment of French soldiers came on board *en route* for the Crimea, officered by a remarkably fine, handsome young man. Two brother officers, who came to see him off, shook hands most warmly, and then they kissed each other on each rough cheek, saying, with great emotion, “*Adieu, mon cher ami!*” —this terrible Crimea !

We also take in many Greek and several Turkish deck passengers at Gallipoli, with their bedding of quilts, antique-shaped earthen water-jars, and baskets of bread and melons for the journey. The poor Turkish women look very uncomfortable in their white veils and loose, cumbrous cloaks. They are herded up in one corner, from which they do not move, but look like frightened sheep. The men spread their prayer-carpets and began to pray the moment they had settled themselves and their bundles ; kneeling and prostrating themselves until their foreheads touched the deck.

A pretty Turkish child, wrapped in a little fur jacket, slept soundly beside one of the women, who

kept spreading the corner of her red quilt very tenderly over it. Here at Gallipoli we parted with the Nuns, who stepped quietly into a small boat, with their few boxes. Every one crowded round to give them the warmest adieu and best wishes. We often thought of them after they were gone, as you may suppose.

Sad to say, we were all fast asleep as, in the early morning, we swept past Mount Ida, and Sestos, and Abydos, which I was so anxious to see. However, we were wide awake to admire the white castles of the Dardanelles, and now thoroughly comprehended the vast importance of this part of the world to a man of genius and ambition like the Emperor Nicholas. It is a fine sight, steaming up the Dardanelles. We passed some great ships-of-war, French and English, every sail set to a fair wind, and crowded with troops.

The Turks call the town of the Dardanelles, *Channahalis*. It is the ancient Dardanus, where the great treaty was signed between Sylla and Mithridates (you see I learn what I can in my travels), and another, in modern times, between the Turks and English, in 1809.

The tomb of Hecuba is pointed out on the hills above the town ; and across here it is said that Xerxes threw his bridge of boats. Every spot of land in this part of the world is of classic and historical celebrity.

All about the hills we now saw the white tents of the Bashi-Bazouk encampment, commanded by General Beatson. I am told that everything at the Dardanelles strikes the traveller as most primitive. There you see the patient ox at the plough, the women grinding corn, or spinning at a rude wheel, or drawing water at the ancient wells, just as represented in the old Scripture days.

Our last evening at sea was fine, but the sun went down red and angry-looking. The fires of the charcoal-burners on the mountains produced a magnificent effect as the darkness came on. Many of them extended over several acres of the steep and rugged sides, casting a red and lurid glare on the sky, as if vast cities were on fire at a distance.

At night a tremendous gale arose. The ship rocked and swayed so, that people with difficulty prevented themselves from being flung out of their berths. The Sea of Marmora is as famous for sudden and violent tempests as the Black Sea.

We were all thankful when morning came. I dressed as well as I could, and managing to tumble on deck, held firmly by a rope, and watched the enormous waves, and huge masses of dark clouds rushing by. The ship presented a scene of great confusion : the poor soldiers had been unable to keep up their awning ; Turks, Maltese, and Greeks, wet to the

skin, and shivering with cold and terror. I pitied especially the poor Turkish women, whose drenched veils clung closely to their pale faces.

We arrived at Constantinople several hours later than we ought to have done, owing to the roughness of the weather; but as we approached the Golden Horn the clouds were breaking up as after an April storm, the wind gradually dropped, and so, as it were between smiles and tears, clouds and brightness, the beautiful city—the old Byzantium and once Christian capital, rival of Rome herself—with its domes and minarets and cypress-groves and white palaces, burst upon our charmed sight. The shores of Europe and Asia seem to unite in forming a vast bay, in the middle of which rises from the dark blue waves a city more beautiful and picturesque than words can describe. “A fine government might here guide or rule the world,” is one of your first thoughts.

Long we stood delighted upon the deck, first turning our eyes upon distant Mount Olympus, whose summit glittered with snow; then upon the shadowy islands of the Propontis; then upon the sparkling Bosphorus, gay with innumerable caiques; then upon the crowds of stately ships of all nations; then upon the dark cypress-groves and white hospital of Scutari, where poor Miss Nightingale lay sick; then upon “beautiful Stamboul,” with its crowning mosque

of Santa Sophia and lofty minarets. But all this *must* be seen in sunshine to be believed in, and *then* you will think it a dream.

Numerous caiques and other boats crowded round our vessel here. Presently a French officer, wearing several orders, stepped on board. What a happy meeting it seemed with his wife and little daughter! Lucie clung to her father's arm with touching pride and delight. We bade adieu and congratulated at the same time.

Alas for the Bashi-Bazouks!—the wretched prisoners, who looked the image of sullen, hardened despair. Once or twice I thought they were going to throw themselves into the Bosphorus.

At last all was prepared for us to land, before the disembarkation of the troops. Crowds of caiquejees, kept at bay by a soldier on duty at the ladder, were disputing in loud Greek for the passengers. Mr. Newall was kind enough to offer us a place in the 'Elba's' boat, which had been sent to meet him. So the English sailors dashed through the whole swarm, and soon set us on shore at Galata, the landing-place of Pera. It was difficult to get in through the crowds of caiques; but the boatmen of the Bosphorus, both Greeks and Turks, fine men as they are, pretty soon make way for a crew of English sailors.

At last we were on shore, among most wretched, di-

lapidated wooden houses, on a filthy, broken, crowded pavement, amidst a motley group of Greeks and Turks, soldiers and sailors, fruit-sellers and money-changers.

A few veiled black women were squatted on the edge of the Bridge of Boats, over which countless crowds were passing and repassing, and which reminded me of the bridge in the Vision of Mirza.

We soon found a couple of *hamals* (Turkish porters), whose backs were bowed almost to a crescent by constantly carrying heavy loads; and after a rapid walk up the steep and narrow streets, after being jostled by strings of donkeys, after having narrowly escaped being trampled on by caparisoned horses, treading on dead rats, melon-rinds, and cats,—confused, enchanted with the *without*, disgusted beyond measure at the *within*,—we arrived, tired and almost breathless, at Mysseri's Hotel. They have given me such a delightful room, with four large windows looking down the Golden Horn, and on the distant mountains.

Good-night, all ! I am very tired, but forward this formidable packet with great pleasure, thinking that some trace of our travels may amuse you.

## LETTER V.

PERA.—ENGLISH AND FRENCH OFFICERS.—NEWS OF THE WAR.—  
THERAPIA.—SHORES OF THE BOSPHORUS.—FALL OF SEBASTOPOL.  
—PUBLIC REJOICINGS.—SISTERS OF CHARITY.—ILLUMINATIONS.

Pera, September 10th, 1855.

My dear Mr. Hornby,

You will be glad to hear that we arrived here safe and well on Saturday, after a most delightful passage, with exception of the last night, when it blew a gale in the Sea of Marmora, with the wind dead against us, which retarded our arrival by several hours.

We have suffered a good deal from heat on board ship, and now find these large and lofty rooms deliciously pleasant and cool. I sit quite enchanted at my window, which looks all down the Golden Horn, where English and French men-of-war, and a vast number of transports, lie at anchor in all their surly grandeur ; while caiques and Greek boats with snow-white sails, flit about to and fro, like birds on the water. I saw the sun set on all this, on the first

evening of my arrival. Such a glorious sight! the mountains in the distance mingling with the purple clouds.

It is a very striking scene at the *table-d'hôte* here. One can scarcely see to the end of the table. Almost all the guests are English and French officers, either in uniform, or in odd and semi-eastern costume—long beards and sunburnt faces. The din of so many voices is almost as confusing, I should think, as the roar of cannon at Sebastopol: but by degrees I began to pick up a few sentences here and there, which amused me very much.

“Come and try a day or two *over there*,” says one handsome boy-officer to another. “I can give you a plank and some capital clean straw in my tent, within a quarter of an hour of the Redan. You won’t mind a shell now and then.”

Then I heard another recounting—“Doubled up for six weeks, like a ball, with cramp,—my tent like a mud-pond,—dreadful pain!” “Where’s his Highness?” says another, further up the table. “His Highness disappeared the other day,” was the reply, with a burst of laughter: “he went to take his turn in the trenches, and has never been seen since.” (His Highness is evidently a nickname for some one very much laughed at.)

“Beastly shell!” drawled a tremendously tall, af-

fected Rifle ; " spoiled the best dinner we had had for a long time, and killed that very amusing fellow —, who sat next to me. It was par-ti-cu-larly awkward ; for the tent fell down upon us, and we were obliged to crawl out !"—"I felt quite out-of-sorts when it was all over—missed my arm so confoundedly (it was still in a sling), and got no dinner, for poor — had asked me to dine with him in the morning, and he was killed half an hour before."

You may easily imagine how it startles one at first to hear all the horrible incidents of war spoken of after this fashion. I am the only lady here at present ; and as there are no private sitting-rooms, I have to return to my bedroom immediately after dinner, which is very dreary. There is nothing to do here in an evening for strangers. The streets are dark and dangerous ; drunken soldiers and sailors tumbling over the wretched pavement, and noisy Greeks singing and shouting aloud.

The watchmen, with their iron-shod staves, make a strange clinking noise as they strike them against the stones. The only *English* sound is from the distant ships' bells, which is pleasant enough to me. Mysseri is Eôthen's dragoman, whom he speaks of so highly. He is married to an Englishwoman, a most kind and excellent person, to whom everybody flies in all the numerous difficulties which strangers meet with here.

The hotel is crowded, not even a sofa to be got ; the large hall is almost filled with the baggage of officers coming and going, and constantly resounds with the clinking of spurs and the clank of swords upon the stone pavement.

It seems indeed a strange war-gathering here. Every one is anxious for news from Sebastopol ; and even the sick and wounded, angry and impatient at being away from the scene of action, and from the tremendous attack which it is expected will soon take place. Numbers of English and French ships, crowded with troops, are constantly going up to Balaklava.

Poor fellows ! they are always to be seen clustering thickly against the side of the vessel, seemingly delighted with the novel and splendid scene through which they are passing. What a relief it will be to one's mind when this dreadful place is taken !

Adieu, with kindest love to you all ! We are perfectly well, notwithstanding the heat of the days, and the extreme chilliness of the nights ; but still seem in *Dreamland*.

Therapia, Sunday, Sept. 16th, 1855.

We have been obliged to fly the heat and confusion of Pera, and find this place very delightful, with cool breezes constantly coming down from the Black Sea. The Bosphorus is certainly wondrously beautiful : the

shore on each side is one unbroken but irregular line of white palaces, with terraced gardens, mosques and minarets, reflected in the clear blue water. The hills above are covered with cypress-trees, pretty kiosks, gardens, and wooded slopes.

I have as yet but little to tell you about the country, as Edmund has been very much engaged, and I have not ventured upon any expedition alone. However, I must first return to the three last days of our stay at Pera.

The news of the taking of Sebastopol, which has no doubt reached you by this time, was received with great delight by all here, excepting the Greeks, who were greatly enraged and disappointed. The Emperor of Russia being the head of the Greek Church, they looked forward to the success of the Russian cause as their own; and hating their masters the Turks, would have loved to see them, and their friends the Allies, humiliated.

The Bosphorus on Monday morning presented a gay and beautiful spectacle. All the ships-of-war and crowds of merchant-vessels of all nations were decked with flags, and many large and splendid ones floated from the principal balconies. The roar of guns from the different vessels was tremendous,—enough to startle the echoes of Olympus, whose snows glittered brightly above the clouds of smoke.

Kind Mrs. Mysseri took me to the terrace on the top of her house, where I had a splendid view of immense extent, almost too dazzling to be agreeable. I had a pleasant peep into the Swedish ambassador's shady garden. On the other side of the hotel is what was once the Russian embassy, *now* a French hospital. Several poor wounded officers were wheeled in their chairs into the balcony to rejoice with the rest. Two or three of them threw their caps into the air in their joy, which they had not strength to pick up again. I took a great interest in watching these windows all the time I was at Pera, and seeing the good Sisters of Charity, so busy, and seemingly so kind to all. When they had a little time to spare, one or two would come out and walk up and down in an open gallery just opposite my windows. Sometimes they talked quietly and gravely together, but generally seemed to prefer reading for a few minutes.

But to return to the rejoicings of Monday. The firing began again at eight in the evening ; and as far as noise and the rattle of windows went, gave us a good idea of a bombardment. All the ships on the Bosphorus, and round the Seraglio Point, and in the harbour, were illuminated, far as the eye could reach. Some of the French men-of-war burned coloured lights. It was a beautiful sight. Pera and Stamboul glittered with lamps : palace and minaret illuminated,

not after our fashion, but more like pale clusters of stars, shining here and there in the deep grey light and over the shifting ripples of the sea.

Presently bands of Turkish "music" paraded the streets; and a more barbarous noise no red Indians could ever perpetrate. Edmund and I sallied forth into the streets, for, as we thought, it was a sight not to be seen again. We bought a little white paper lantern, lighted our taper, and joined the motley crowd.

Banners hung, waving in the night-breeze, from almost every balcony of the principal narrow street; and every window was filled with lamps, just as we put flowers into boxes, all along the sill. It was a most curious, fitful light, and the numbers of picturesque costumes and savage faces singularly striking. Here and there,—at the French, Sardinian, and Swedish Ministers', the Turkish guard-house, and at the numerous *cafanées*,—it was quite a blaze of light; and in these places admiring crowds had so congregated, that we were scarcely able to get on. Presently a band of French soldiers, passing to relieve guard somewhere, cleared the way; and putting ourselves into the channel which they had made, we stumbled over dirt and broken pavement until we gladly found ourselves at Mysseri's door again, close by which the miserable-looking Turkish guard was turning out for the night.

## LETTER VI.

THERAPIA.—ITS PLEASANT CLIMATE.—FLEET AT ANCHOR IN BEICOS BAY.—DEPTH AND CLEARNESS OF THE WATERS OF THE BOSPHORUS.—PHOSPHORESCENT ILLUMINATION AT NIGHT.—SAD INCIDENTS OF THE WAR.—WOUNDED AND SICK OFFICERS ARRIVE FROM BALAKLAVA.—THEIR CONVERSATIONS ON THE ATTACK OF THE REDAN.

Therapia, September 30th, 1855.

My dear Julia,

We find this a very delightful place; the weather is just like a fine September in England—the sun hotter perhaps in the middle of the day. Last week it was stormy, and we heard the wind very much; as the hotel projects into the Bosphorus, and northern gales rush down from the Black Sea with tremendous force. A large fleet is lying at anchor at Beicos Bay, just opposite our windows. The lights at the mast-heads look so curious at night, with the dark mountainous ridge of Asian hills frowning grimly just behind them. A few English vessels are moored close to the little causeway of our hotel, and one can

hear the "All's well" of the watch, and the bells chiming the quarters. In the daytime it is by no means an uncommon thing to see a bowsprit peeping in at your window, the water is so deep close in-shore. They tell me that you can see down to the depth of thirty feet on calm days; and it is charming to watch the different sorts of silvery and many-tinted fish swimming about, sword-fish darting along, and immense porpoises gambolling and romping with the bright, foamy waves further out. At night, every ripple, every stroke of the oar, is a phosphoric flash of light; and the track of a caique on the soft grey, shadowy water, is as like a fairy phantom as anything which you can well conceive. For the last few nights it has been moonlight, so that we could see quite over to the Asian shore, and the white marble palace of the Pasha of Egypt there. The large stars look down so calm and clear upon this beautiful bay, on the dark hills around, and on the fine ships reposing, as it were, here and there, that it is difficult indeed to leave the window.

The Mail arrived last night, and brought our long looked-for letters, so that I feel quite happy and cheerful today after my depression and anxiety about news from home.

In this place one hears so much that is sad, and sees so much suffering in many ways, that, notwithstanding

standing the numbers that are cheerful and gay, the mind becomes painfully impressed with all that is and has been so distressing in this war. My room was occupied only a few days ago by poor Mrs. ——, whose husband was killed at the attack on the Redan. She was afterwards brought down here on her way back to England, and has cried for hours (Madame Patela, our hostess, tells me) in the very armchair in which I am now sitting. What increased the poignancy of her grief was that, after having endured agonies of suspense during the attack, she was assured by a friend that her husband had escaped unhurt; and, in the midst of her joy and thankfulness, he was carried up mortally wounded and insensible. Several wounded and sick officers have arrived here from Balaklava. Three or four of them are well enough to sit with the rest of the travellers on the divan in the public sitting-room. Now and then they talk of scenes in the camp before Sebastopol, and incidents of the late assault; but, generally speaking, poor fellows! they seem quite wearied with so much misery and suffering, and turn with the greatest relief and pleasure to a chat about the peaceful scenes of England and home. I shall have many sad, as well as merry stories to tell you when we meet, if I can but remember all I hear.

Colonel —— has just come in from Sebastopol,

well and strong, and full of news and conversation. Sometimes I pause to listen, and then, being anxious not to miss this Mail, go on writing again, with my head somewhat confused by a description of military movements, and sad indignant comments on terrible mistakes and fatal mismanagement, on which point unfortunately all agree. Captain —— (wounded in the head at the attack on the Redan) is just saying that the English had no business there, and shudders as he speaks of the numbers who fell around him. He and several others are of opinion that we needed only to have supported the French as they entered the Malakoff. The French had easy work compared with ours ; they had brought their earthworks within a few feet of the tower ; ours were at least two hundred and eighty from the Redan ; and in charging up that space our poor fellows were mowed down by grape and canister.

The Malakoff once taken, the Redan must have fallen, as the guns of the former commanded it ; so it would appear that all these English troops were thrown away, except for the slight diversion they made in favour of the French, which was really carrying courtesy to our Allies rather far. Captain —— also says, that our men were much spoiled for a desperate assault by the long and harassing time in the trenches, and by a habit which they had neces-

sarily contracted there of “sniping,” as they called it; which is, ducking down the head and shoulders to avoid shot and shell.

Many say, that the same men ought never to have been brought up for an attack who had been repulsed and dispirited before. But I must not venture on any more recollections of military conversations, lest I make mistakes in getting out of my province so far,—only I thought these particulars would interest you; and I believe that I have reported them very correctly, especially considering the crowd about me, all talking of this terrible day, so dearly won. But I must say adieu, and Good-night! Pray write often.

## LETTER VII.

PLEASANT MORNINGS AT THERAPIA.—GREEK FISHERMEN AND FELUCCAS.—SEA-BIRDS, AND LEGEND OF THE “AMES DAMNÉES.”—MANY-COLOURED FISH OF THE BOSPHORUS.—TERRACED GARDENS.—SHIPS RETURNING FROM THE CRIMEA.—THE CAMP AT BUYUKDERE.

Therapia, September 30th, 1855.

My dear Mr. Hornby,

You, who are so fond of early walks, would enjoy this sunny Therapia of a morning. Nothing can be more bright and sparkling ; and it is so pleasant to be awakened by the splash of oars just under your window, and then to watch the gaily-dressed Greek fishermen hauling nets into their caiques, quite silvered with fish ; or ancient-looking feluccas, with their picturesque crews and white sails set, dashing over the merry waves with boat-loads of wood for Stamboul.

Numberless sea-gulls and sea-swallows fly about the Bosphorus ; but the most remarkable are a small, dark-grey gull, with wings lined with a silvery white.

These are said by the boatmen to be the souls of the guilty wives drowned in its waters. They are for ever flying rapidly up and down, in parties of twenty or thirty, and night or day are never seen to rest. I cannot write the Turkish name, but the French have well translated it “âmes damnées.” Poor “lost souls!” As the punishment of drowning in the Bosphorus is now almost abolished, I suppose there will soon be no more, unless indeed no period of release is granted them from their punishment on earth —no final rest for their poor tired wings! If so, a thousand years hence the traveller may see the same swift silver shadow flit over the water which startles me today.

We had a very delightful walk this morning to Buyukdere. The quay at Therapia, along the shore, is so irregular and narrow, that when the Bosphorus suddenly lashes itself into a fury, as it often does, one can scarcely escape a dash of its waves.

The morning was calm and beautiful; the tints of many-coloured seaweed reflected from far below. An old Turk was seated on a large stone, quietly fishing. He constantly pulled up fish of the brightest colours, which in different lights were certainly green, red, and blue. One recognized them immediately as the fish of the enchanted pond in the ‘Arabian Nights.’ I would not have put them into the fryingpan for

more than four hundred pieces of gold. The wall would certainly have opened, and the Egyptian maiden have appeared, with her myrtle wand and mysterious beauty ; and these things startle quiet Englishwomen. I would not therefore let Edmund enter into a negotiation to buy them ; and we strolled slowly on, with the pleasant sound of waves on one side, and of whispered voices on the other,—for the Greek and Armenian women are never tired of watching the English people as they pass by their shady windows and terraces.

There are some charming houses here. The first large one from our hotel is that of M. Baltazzi, a rich Greek banker. Through the trellis-arches of the walled garden, we caught a tantalizing glimpse of the loveliest Eastern flowers in their fullest beauty,—three terraces one above another ; the walls clothed with luxuriant creepers, and the hills of Therapia behind.

The French Ambassador's is a very fine old house, once belonging to Prince Ypsilanti. Its vast white stone hall and fountain, with windows almost darkened with shady plants and flowers, look deliciously cool and pleasant to the passer-by.

The English Embassy is more shut in, the entrance being quite shaded with luxuriant myrtles and other shrubs ; but the windows and terraced gardens

face the Bosphorus, and command a lovely view. Further on is a small Turkish battery and guard-house, and close by a tiny mosque and fountain, near which we sat down to watch some English ships slowly steaming down from the Crimea. The decks were crowded with troops (sick and wounded going to Scutari or home), and in the fore-part of the vessels we could easily make out the grey coats of Russian prisoners. All the poor fellows seemed to be admiring the beautiful shores of the Bosphorus ; and well they might, after the rugged, savage coasts of the Black Sea.

What a fine sight it is to see ships thus passing the ruined castles of Asia, and beneath the Giant's Mountain ! The barren hills and rocks of the European shore gradually soften as they approach the beautiful Bay of Buyukdere, which must seem the loveliest harbour that ever a weary ship furled sail in. Many come down broken and torn from the furious tempests of the Black Sea, to cast anchor in the deep blue water, mirrored with the row of white palaces which fringe the shore, and with the cypress-trees and vineyards, and kiosks of the hills above. Mr. Bell has made a beautiful water-colour sketch of Buyukdere, with the fine aqueduct of Sultan Mahmoud in the distance, which I hope you will see on his return to England.

Major Biddulph is also very busy with his skilful pencil ; and well he may be, for every scene is a picture in itself : we thought so this morning at each turn of the winding seaside path ; whether looking on the gleaming Bosphorus with its mountain-girt entrance, ships sailing into the beautiful haven, and caiques flitting about among the white sea-birds ; or on the many-coloured cliffs on our left, tangled with briar and wild-flowers ; or on the hills covered with heather and arbutus, on which Bulgarian shepherds were tending their flocks of goats and sheep.

Presently we came to the gate of a vineyard, and entering it made signs to a poor, dejected-looking Croat lying under an old fig-tree, that we were both tired and thirsty. So he pointed to his piece of matting, which, with an earthen water-jar, seemed to be all his household possessions, and went to gather grapes, which he soon brought back to us in the coolest vine-leaves. A Greek boy was strolling about the vineyard ; he spoke Italian pretty well, and entered into a friendly conversation with us ; asked many intelligent questions about the war, and said he was most anxious to enter into the service of the English, who were “bravi genti.” He gave me a handful of walnuts, nicely washed, and placing his hand on his heart, with the air of a prince, hoped that we might enjoy our luncheon ; then, smiling, he shut the garden-

gate and joined his companions. What native grace there is among the peasantry here !

Our rest in the shade, and the grapes, were both delicious ; and our friend the Croat seemed to have gained an equal amount of satisfaction by the few piastres which we offered in exchange. He seemed so very poor and lonely ! This vineyard had been robbed by some soldiers of the Turkish Contingent two nights before, and one of the Croat gardeners was murdered in attempting to drive them off ; at least, so we were told at Therapia.

On approaching the camp at Buyukdere, we were struck by a magnificent group of plane-trees, by the side of the Bosphorus. The soldiers had put seats round one or two of them ; a Greek cafejee had set up his stall near, and a motley group were regaling themselves with coffee and the everlasting pipe under the wide-spreading boughs. The trees are called the "Seven Brothers ;" and tradition says that Godfrey de Bouillon encamped beneath them in the time of the Crusades. His Generalship would be rather surprised now, could he see English officers trying to drill the Sultan's miserable, dispirited-looking men into something like soldiers, to fight in a common cause. Major Johnson was so kind as to show us over the camp, a curious scene enough.

The valley was filled with white tents ; and double

rows of oxen, and refractory-looking mules, were tethered all around. Numerous wild dogs were prowling about the camp-fires, round which squatted some hideous black Arabs, who were cooking in large iron pots. One could not easily conceive more wild and ferocious-looking creatures than were gathered together here, as camp-followers.

The Turkish soldiers were thin, dejected, and debased-looking, to my eyes. I could just believe in their *endurance* behind earthworks, or stone walls, and that is all. An English sergeant said to me, with an expression of profound contempt, "They 'll hang back, Ma'am, as sure as fate, and let all their officers be killed, if ever they try to lead them to a charge." However, who can wonder at the degraded state of the poor Turkish soldiers, on learning their miserable, hopeless condition,—ill-paid, ill-fed, and cheated at every turn by their own officers?

Perhaps the men of the Contingent, honestly and kindly treated as they are, may improve. They are now expecting to be sent to Kertch; and the officers have plenty of hard work before them, if nothing else. I was in hopes that we might have heard of prospects of peace, after the fall of Sebastopol; here nothing is seen but active preparation for war. The cavalry are to winter at Scutari. Everybody is mad for *news*, both here and at Constantinople. It

seems strange that we should be longing for what is authentic from England. Officers grumble about their friends in the Crimea not writing, and then again excuse them by saying, "Well, I suppose they are so busy."

But I must say Adieu ! Colonel Pitt kindly offers the use of his *pack-saddle* to take my letters to the Embassy, and such an opportunity is not to be despised. Pray write often, for there is nothing to us like news from home.

## LETTER VIII.

VALLEY OF THE SWEET WATERS.—PICTURESQUE GROUPS OF TURKISH WOMEN.—THE SULTAN'S DAUGHTER.—TURKISH BELLES AND BABIES.—TURKISH CARRIAGES.—ARABAS AND TELEKIS.—VENDORS OF DIFFERENT WARES IN THE VALLEY.—BOILED INDIAN CORN.—MUSICIANS.—ANATOLIAN SHEPHERD.—ENGLISH SAILORS.—“BONO JOHNNY.”—THE YOUNG PASHA.—THE VALLEY AT SUNSET.

Therapia, October 26th, 1855.

My dear Julia,

ON Friday we went in a caique to the “Valley of the Sweet Waters of Asia,”—the Turkish Hyde Park. It is a charming spot, shut in by ranges of hills on three sides, with the Bosphorus glittering before it, and a fine view of the opposite castles of Europe, with their ivy-covered walls and towers. We landed on a kind of terrace, beyond which was a very large white marble fountain, looking, as all fountains do here, like a square built temple, ornamented with inscriptions in coloured and golden letters. A stream of water fell from each side into a deep tank, out of which some poor Turkish women were filling their

little earthen water-jars. Further on, under the shade of some magnificent plane-trees, sat the women of a higher class, on cushions which their slaves had brought from the caiques.

Nothing, in point of colouring and grouping, could be more strikingly beautiful than these clusters of women by the trees and fountain. Imagine five or six in a row; their jet-black eyes shining through their white veils, under which you can see the gleam of jewels which confine their hair (often dressed, by the bye, very much *à la Eugénie*). Your first impression is that they look just like a bed of splendid flowers. The lady at the top of the row of cushions, and evidently the chief wife, is dressed in a feridjee cloak of the palest pink, edged with black velvet or silver; her face and neck all snow-white gauze, under which gleams a silver wreath or sprigs of jewels: for the *yashmak* in these days is so transparent as rather to add to the beauty of the wearer than to hide it. She generally carries a large fan of peacocks' feathers, both sides of the fan alike. The next is arrayed in the palest straw-colour shot with white; then perhaps follows an emerald-green, edged with gold, and by her side a lovely violet. The white *yashmak* contrasts prettily with all these colours. The feridjees of the slaves are often of a bright yellow or scarlet, edged with black, which, with the

few dressed in darkest brown and green, harmonize perfectly with the light and delicate colours.

The Turkish women have certainly wonderful art in blending colours. In fact I hardly know how my eyes will bear a return to England. Here the water, the sky, the houses, the dresses, the boats are so gay and beautiful,—the cypress-trees and the valleys so rich and green.

The Valley of the Sweet Waters takes its name from a small stream which winds through it and falls into the Bosphorus just above the fountain I mentioned. The water of this stream is highly prized for its purity, but, owing to the heavy rains of a day or two before, it was now rather muddy. So I braved the anger of the nymph of the spring by refusing to taste of its tiny waves, but invoked of her health and beauty for the poor Turkish women,—for it is their only possession,—and gave up my place to a veiled lady who was trying to drink without showing her face, which seemed to be a difficult process. We then walked through the valley, and watched the beautiful effect of light and shade upon the surrounding hills, crowned with cypress and other trees, and with here and there a pretty kiosk and garden. There are no roads here; so by a lane that would shame the roughest in Ireland, came the Sultan's married daughter,—married to Aali Ghalib Pasha, the son of

Reschid Pasha. Edmund helped Lady Robinson *into some brambles* on the steep bank ; I was already safely wedged in the roots of an old fig-tree, and thus we quietly awaited the passing of the Asiatic beauties.

First came three or four men on horseback, in handsomely braided uniforms, and fezzes of course. Then two mounted Negroes (more frightful specimens of that race I never saw), armed with long swords ; then the carriage, a very droll imitation of an English one, most grotesquely ornamented ; the harness covered with silver, and the reins red. Two grooms, in ugly, badly-fitting uniforms of blue and silver, guiding the horses, which were grey, and of matchless beauty and gentleness. The coachman was a droll-looking make-up, of English clothes (much too small for him) and Turkish fez and fat. I heard that this equipage is considered a wonderful display of elegance and civilization, and it was evidently greatly admired. We could not see much of the lady (who is said to be very lovely), the Negroes keeping close to the windows, as they splashed up the mud all over their uniforms ; besides which her yashmak was thickly folded. I could only see plainly her beautiful fan of snow-white feathers, the handle glittering with emeralds.

The lady on the opposite seat (there were three in the carriage) was more thinly veiled, very young, and

very pretty. I saw her face plainly, and her feridjee being a *little* off her shoulders, I threw an envious glance on a violet-coloured velvet jacket embroidered with gold, and fastened at the throat with a large jewelled clasp, which gleamed through the gauzy veil. As to beauty of mere dress and ease of attitude, nothing that I have seen in life or in pictures can give the slightest idea of the wonderful grace, the extreme delicacy, and bird-of-paradise-like uselessness of the Turkish belle. Women of rank look like hot-house flowers, and are really *cultivated* to the highest perfection of physical beauty, having no other employment but to make their skins as snow-white and their eyebrows as jet-black as possible. When young their skin is literally as white as their veils, with the faintest tinge of pink on the cheek, like that in the inside of a shell, which blends exquisitely with the tender apple-leaf green, and soft violet colours, of which they are so fond.

The reverse of the picture is, that after the first bloom of youth is past, the skin becomes yellow and sickly-looking, and you long to give the yashmak a pull and admit a fresh breeze to brighten up the fine features.

A belle, and a beauty too, the Turkish woman *must* be: for nothing can be more wretched than to see the poor thing attempting to walk, or to make herself at

all useful. She shuffles along the ground exactly like an embarrassed paroquette, looking as if her loose garments must inevitably flutter off at the next step. The drapery which falls so gracefully and easily about her in a carriage, or while reclining on cushions, seems untidy and awkward when she is moving about. In fact, if she is not a beauty, and is not the property of a rich man, she is the most miserable-looking creature in creation. It is the drollest thing in the world to see a poor Turkish woman rolling along with her baby ; just preventing it from falling into the gutter, her loose yellow slipper from falling off at every step, her yashmak from showing too much of her face, her feridjee from flying away, and her open-worked stockings (which are generally full of holes if she has any) from getting splashed in the terrible filth of the roads, or rather dirty alleys.

The babies are wonderful little bundles of fat, un-comfortableness, and finery. They hardly seem like babies at all, generally having an old look, with very white faces and very black eyes. They are to us also an unnatural sort of babies, dressed in jacket and trousers. They eat cucumbers and chestnuts, and are “nursed” at the same time. They wear richly jewelled fezzes and ragged shoes, and are altogether wonderful little illustrations of Eastern inconsistency and incompleteness, finery and untidiness.

The most curious-looking equipages at the Sweet Waters are the arabas, a huge kind of waggon, made of dark oak, rudely carved and ornamented, and drawn by two white oxen, caparisoned in the most fantastic manner. The collars, four or five feet high, are covered with scarlet tassels, and long crimson cords run from the collar to the tail of the animals, which they hold up most becomingly in a kind of festoon. Round the neck of each ox is a string of blue or many-coloured beads as a charm against the evil-eye ; and the forehead and each cheek of the gentle animals is slightly tinged with red paint. A handsome canopy of scarlet cloth (sometimes even of velvet), embroidered with gold and trimmed with gold fringe, protects the veiled ladies, children, and black slaves inside from the sun. The large cushions of the araba are often made of the same rich materials ; so I leave you to imagine what a mixture of magnificence and extreme rudeness is to be seen here.

The bright fans and parasols, beneath the awning of this strange equipage, flutter gaily in the breeze ; and thus a charming picture of Eastern out-door life does this valley present on a day of golden sunshine, with the dark blue Bosphorus on one side, and the beautiful hills of Asia on the other.

But here comes a teleki tumbling along full of ladies ; and Edmund excites some surprise among its

veiled occupants, by removing, with the help of a stout stick, a large stone, over which the carriage of the Sultan's daughter, numerous arabas, and many a pedestrian, had stumbled (and no doubt for months before), just at the entrance of the valley; notwithstanding the crowd of Turkish servants and sturdy Negroes standing about. A teleki is very like the Cinderella's pumpkin-carriage of children's story-books; only I don't believe that any one could wear glass slippers in them now; for they are perfectly innocent of springs, and jolt frightfully over the wretched roads. There is seldom any place for the driver, this functionary holding the reins at full length, and running by the side of the horses. He is generally splashed all over with mud, or covered with dust, but has plenty of embroidery on his coat.

Scattered about the valley are vendors of different wares, and it is most amusing to watch them. Here, is a venerable Turk of the old school, with a stately turban and silvery beard, selling sweetmeats with the air of a prince. There, an Egyptian with potteries from Egypt, consisting of little vases and water-bottles, in which we invested a few piastres. There is a wood fire, over which a Greek in gay costume, has slung an immense iron pot, in which heads of Indian corn are gently stewing. The poorer Turkish women, strolling about on foot, stop to buy. I thought

I should like to taste one ; and a good-natured Negress, a miracle of hideousness, with a grin meant to be fascinating, gave me the iron hook (which she had just secured), to fish one out for myself, which seemed to be considered the rare thing. However, I did not at all appreciate the dainty, and soon contrived to throw it away unseen. Here is a Greek stand of toys,—windmills, Jacks-in-the-box, and eccentric-looking birds and beasts in gorgeous array. The Greek, who is a handsome young fellow, calls out, “Buy, Johnny, buy !” to the English passers-by, and looks very proud of his knowledge of the language. I thought how pleased Edith would be with all this.

Now we come to a band of “musicians” seated on the turf, and making to *our* ears the most atrocious noise that ever set a human being’s teeth on edge. A groaning tambourine, a drum, and a little three-stringed instrument of torture, something like a guitar, with some flutes as high and shrill as the screeching of a kite, form the combination of horrible sounds to which the men, in a nasal twang, scream some legend or tale, at the top of their voice, just as long as any one remains to listen. We were there, in the valley, for three hours, and on leaving, the Sultan’s daughter was listening still, the slaves seated on the turf, drinking coffee and stretching themselves quite at their ease. Now we meet the

Austrian Ambassador and his Staff, who have been looking with surprise and interest at a most savage-looking Dervish, dressed as an Anatolian shepherd, and who, attired in black sheepskins, and leaning on a knotty club, which Jack might have taken from the giants, surveyed the passing scene from beneath an old fig-tree on the bank, his wild eyes half hidden with hair, as matted and as dark as his beard. Now we pass three or four French officers in full regiments, looking at the ladies in the coolest and most persevering manner possible ; utterly regardless of the fierce looks of some of the armed Negroes, who mutter "Giaour" between their teeth, and roll the whites of their eyes. Edmund is now struck by a band of Greek women with wreaths on their heads, but an unfortunate attempt in the rest of their dress to look like Frenchwomen, which does not suit them at all.

Yonder is a coffee-stall, and two English sailors with tiny China cups in their huge fingers, trying to drink sugarless coffee as if they liked it, and conversing fluently with the grave, dark-eyed Turk, by the aid of "Bono" and "Johnny" and plenty of broad, eloquent smiles. By the way, the Turks call the English, male and female, "Johnny," and the French "Dis donc;" all commercial transactions being carried on in the most marvellous manner, often by the sole aid of these two words.

And now unveiled, because she is only about twelve years old, attended by two Negresses and an armed Turk, comes a Pasha's daughter. The dress and trousers are of a thick kind of gauze, of a pale salmon-colour, and sprigged with silver. A green velvet cap, beautifully embroidered, covers her head, and her hair hangs down her back in numerous plaits, the ends of which are frizzed out very roughly. Her shoes are of embroidered yellow leather, with peaks turning up in front, and she seems very proud of her gay-coloured French parasol. This little belle shuffles languidly along, sometimes speaking a few words to her attendants, who seem to adore her.

Here is a teleki, drawn up under the shade of a large walnut-tree at the end of the valley. The horses are taken out, and fighting with a party of mules tethered by the hedge; but nobody takes any notice of them, and the drivers are asleep, or smoking quietly at a distance on the grass.

Inside this teleki are four Turks, smoking long chibouques (which project out of the door-window), as placidly as if it were the only business or delight in life. A languid waive of the hand brings another party of "musicians," who forthwith squat down between the hedge and the wheels, and begin their horrid noise. A Pasha's son rides listlessly up on his little Mytelene pony, to listen to them. I was parti-

cularly struck with this young gentleman, as a specimen of "Young Turkey." He wore a jacket and trousers (after the English shape) of fine scarlet cloth, the jacket so splendidly embroidered with gold as to be quite resplendent in the sun. Over his shoulder a golden baldric; his sword-sheath was of black and gold, the hilt shining with gems; his fez a plain dark crimson one, with the usual purple tassel. A huge slave stood beside the pony, which was splendidly caparisoned and very dirty, and the little Pasha leaned languidly on his shoulder, as if it was too great an exertion for him to listen to the "music" sitting upright in his saddle. Presently he seemed to intimate that he had heard enough; so the slave led his pony to an araba, at the side of which he dismounted, his mimic golden sword dangling about his little feet as he languidly threw himself into the laps of the ladies, who overwhelmed him with caresses. Such are the rich here—enervated from their earliest youth.

"How I should enjoy whipping that boy!" exclaimed an English gentleman of our party. Perhaps he coveted the sweets, we said, with which the young Pasha was now being regaled.

And now, my dear Julia, I think I have given you as good a rough and hurried sketch of a Turkish out-door scene as I can well do in a letter. At any rate you can depend upon its accuracy. The evening

sun was resting upon it in full brilliancy, and all the Eastern gorgeousness of purple and gold, as we walked back to the crowds of caiques in waiting. Our eyes lingered long on the splendid groups still seated by the fountain, and under the trees just tinged with the first shades of autumn. It was a beautiful sight.

## LETTER IX.

NEWS FROM HOME.—INVALIDS FROM SCUTARI AND THE CRIMEA.—CHAT ABOUT THE WAR.—SARDINIAN AND FRENCH OFFICERS.—THE COMMISSARIAT.—SCENERY OF THE CRIMEA.—RAMBLE THROUGH THE SULTAN'S VALLEY.—ANCIENT PLANE-TREES AND FOUNTAIN.—DINNER ON BOARD THE 'ELBA.'—BUYUKDERE AT NIGHT.

Therapia, November 8th, 1855.

My dear Mother,

ON Tuesday last we had the great pleasure of receiving a packet of letters from England. The mail-boat had been detained at the Dardanelles, owing to some accident to her screw, and we had been anxiously expecting news from home. Edmund happened to be out when our letters were sent in from the Embassy, and he found me reading my share in high glee. Presently we came to the book and parcel of newspapers, for which we return many thanks. The papers especially are a great treat; and here we are just like girls and boys at school, sharing all the news and books which come from home. Each floor in these

Greek and Turkish houses forms a very large apartment (*salaamlik*). The upper end is all windows, with divans, or low broad sofas underneath them; so that you recline quite at your ease, and see all that is passing on the Bosphorus. On each side of this room are the different private apartments,—at least bedrooms; for the hotel is so crowded just now, that a private sitting-room is quite out of the question—except for one lady who is alone here, waiting for her husband's return from Sebastopol. So when we have any papers, or any pleasant books, we put our contribution also on the table of this public room; and there is always some one grateful for a little news from England,—some one sent down sick from the Crimea, or just escaped from the hospital at Scutari, and glad of a pleasant hour's reading. If you want to write here, you must resolutely shut yourself up in your own bedroom; for it is impossible to close your ears to tales of war by sea and land, to hair-breadth escapes, to everything in short that is amusing, frightful, horrible. I am out a great deal, but occasionally listen with much interest to the conversation of the salaamlik.

Several invalids have arrived. Many who have borne up bravely through all kinds of privation and suffering during the siege, have totally knocked up since the taking of Sebastopol.

Poor Mr. Petre, of the 6th Dragoon Guards, is lying on the divan as helpless as a child, from the effects of fever. I often sit with him of a morning, and it seems to cheer him up to talk about getting back to England and his friends, and seeing his favourite horses and dogs once more. He cannot dine at the *table-d'hôte* of course, and always looks for a very ripe peach, or bunch of grapes, from me on my return. Sometimes I leave the table earlier, and take my coffee with him, for the evening seems his saddest time. A young officer, who was among the first in, and almost the first cut down at the assault on the Redan, has been here. He was severely wounded and very ill when he first came, but seems one of those blest with a "wonderful constitution;" for he has recovered rapidly, and is already off to England. He is missed here very much, especially by the invalids, for he was full of spirits and fun. His description of the great storm in the Crimea, when all the tents were blown down, rivalled that of the 'Times' Correspondent. His sketch of a dandy trying to bale the muddy water out of his cherished tent with a *tin mug*, all his fine things swimming about, and two impudent stray geese in the midst, rejoicing at the increasing floods, made even the gravest of us almost die of laughing. In fact I often wish for a short-hand writer here, for a great deal of the conversa-

tion which we hear on “our divan” would be well worth remembering, grave, gay, and political ; but of course everything relating to the war predominates. There are five Sardinian officers staying here, remarkably gentlemanly, well-informed men, and a few French. All the French officers whom we have seen give one the idea of real soldiers—soldiers in earnest, and the right men in the right place ; but generally they are by no means as polished as our English officers.

We dined on board an English steamer the other day, and after dinner I walked up and down the deck with the Captain. He is a rather bluff, but kind-hearted man, and told me that, much as he had been knocked about in a long service, the most miserable part of his life was when our army first landed in the Crimea. He was then in command of the —, and said, what every one knows, that finer and braver fellows were never seen than those he had on board. For some absurd reason, or for no reason at all, they were not allowed to take their tents on shore, although it could have been done with the greatest ease. A tremendous rain came on in the evening—“such a soaking, cold rain,” said the Captain, “as *you* never saw or felt.” Our poor men, as every one knows, “slept” out in it all, *after having just left a crowded and hot ship*. The wood and sticks which they were able to

collect, were of course as wet as the shore itself. So they passed the night. In the morning hundreds of sick men were sent on board different vessels—to die. Captain — told me that he buried from his ship ninety men in thirty hours. The Chaplain could do no more than hurry from one service to another; and three or four poor fellows at a time were plunged over the ship's side. However, I dare say you have read all this in the papers, and it is too terrible a subject to dwell upon. The French not only had their tents put up for the night, but their bedding, means for getting hot water and a comforting cup of coffee before going to sleep. They said that on such a night, even with that, it was bad enough. But I must stop my pen, as usual. If I were to write you all I hear of cruel mismanagement, it would fill a volume—not a letter. Our travelling friends, Mr. Newall and Mr. Bell, returned from the Crimea on Saturday last, and came to see us directly the 'Elba' cast anchor in the Bosphorus. They have been extremely interested in all they have seen.

After finishing the telegraph to Eupatoria, which nearly frightened the Turks out of their wits, as they firmly believed it to be a work of the Evil One, they explored Sebastopol, or rather its ruins, and then rambled forty miles inland. They are quite charmed with the beautiful valleys of Baidar and Alucca, and

have made some capital sketches. I do hope to go up there before our return to England, and to see the vast *steppes* and fine ranges of that part of the world. This morning the ‘Elba’s’ boat took us over to the Asiatic shore, and we had a delightful walk through the celebrated “Sultan’s Valley.” Just at the entrance of the ruined kiosk the French have built some wooden barrack-sheds, and numbers of soldiers were lying on the grass, or *washing*, up to their knees, in the waters of a little stream.

Further up in the valley are a number of ancient and magnificent plane-trees. I stepped twenty-five long paces round two or three of them, so you may fancy their huge girth. Several of them are hollow, and the soldiers have contrived cosy little dwelling-places of these “giant boles.” One of them was comfortably lined with pieces of matting; several little brackets were put up within reach, for the tin mug and pipe; and above all the name of the tenant was carved in fanciful letters deep in the rugged bark,  
MORIER, 1855.

This valley reminds one of the Happy Valley of Rasselas,—just its mountainous hills all around, just its delicious shade, and tinkling streams. In the centre of it is a large white marble fountain, adorned with inscriptions from the Koran (which it is always provoking not to be able to read); and beneath the

plane-trees shading it, several Turks were resting themselves. They had been loading the Seraskier's horses with water from this famous spring, and the whole party seemed averse to leave so cool and charming a spot.

At a little distance, at the foot of a hill, sat a Turkish shepherd, calmly regarding alternately his sleepy flock of sheep and goats, and the party of "Giaours," walking briskly in the sultry heat of the day, a proceeding which I dare say he considered as indicative of insanity. However we returned to the good ship 'Elba' with excellent appetites. The dinner was as nearly an English one as circumstances would admit; we had all received good news from home, and were as merry as possible after our pleasant sail and excursion.

An immense bunch of mistletoe hung in the cabin, which grew but a few days before on an ancient tree in the Crimea, but is now destined for the Christmas *fête* of Mr. Newall's children in England. After dinner the toast in champagne was "Home, and may we all meet there again!" Just then, I don't know how it was, one of the officers of the ship mentioned, that below, in his coffin, lay the body of poor Colonel Maule, who was killed in the Crimea. So terribly do gay and painful scenes mingle here just now! It gave me quite a shock, and I was glad to retreat on deck.

Buyukdere is indeed a lovely sight at night, with the lights of the ships lying in the Bay, and afar off, twinkling in kiosks high on the dark hills, and ringing the ripples on the shore. "Would you not fancy this was a Paradise?" said I to a sailor-friend of mine, who was quietly leaning over the ship's side. "Yes, Ma'am, so long as you didn't land," was the reply. I passed the cook's cabin; that functionary and his man were "washing up," but he came out to say good evening to me. I asked him how he liked the Crimea, and then said how much we had enjoyed the English dinner. "As to the plum-pudding," I said, "coming in on fire too, and with a piece of mistletoe (Crimean though it was) stuck in it, I could really have almost fancied myself in England again." Mr. Cook (a great rough fellow, with a beard up to his eyes) was quite touched at my praise of his dinner, although he declared it was not what he *could* have made it with "more properer things." "But to hear an English lady say she has enjoyed a pudding of my making, pleases *me* more than anything has since the 'Elba' came to these heathenish parts," he exclaimed. I was very much amused at this.

The gentlemen soon left the cabin, and we walked on the upper deck in the clearest moonlight. The Bosphorus looked lovely, with the faint shadow of hills reflected all around it, and myriads of stars looking

down from the clear grey sky. The captain was kind enough to fix his telescope, that I might admire Jupiter and his rings, and some curious spots in the moon, which have lately been unusually visible. Then in this pleasant stillness, only broken occasionally by the sound of oars or of a ship's bell, the captain told me "all about" his wife and little children at home, and I told him "all about" Edith; and so we poor wanderers in a strange land cheer each other up.

We had a delightful row home. The ship's boat, with the rest of the company, were rash enough to race with our fine caiquejees, and were of course ignominiously beaten.

## LETTER X.

HOSPITAL AT THERAPIA.—ITS GARDEN AND BURIAL-PLACE.—  
GRAVE OF CAPTAIN LYONS.—WHITE CROSS ERECTED IN MEMORY  
OF THOSE WHO FELL IN THE CRIMEA.

Therapia, November 10th, 1855.

My dear Mr. Hornby,

THE Mail leaves tomorrow, and thinking that it may perhaps amuse an unoccupied half-hour, I continue my rambling epistle. In my last budget I had not space to tell you of a very interesting visit which the Rev. Mr. Evelyn and I made to the hospital here. It was once a summer palace, and has been given by the Sultan for the use of the sick and wounded English. A little kiosk in the garden, shaded with orange and lemon trees, is devoted to the surgeons. A clergyman and his wife were at the head of it when we first arrived at Therapia. They had been for some months in the Crimea, and came down here greatly shattered, I was told, with all they had gone through. Mrs. M—— especially was a mere shadow, and suf-

fered severely from low fever, and the shock which her nerves had sustained. Even to her friend, Lady Robinson, she could never speak of the horrors and sufferings which she had witnessed. An officer told me that she had been left one night, after an action, in a kind of ruined out-house, with about thirty wounded men, whom the surgeons had been obliged to leave, in order to attend to others. She had but a small quantity of brandy, and knew that, weakened by loss of blood, the only chance of life which the poor fellows had, was being kept up until the return of the surgeons in the morning. All night this brave lady worked hard by the light of a single rushlight. Many died around her, but she kept on undauntedly, and *saved twelve*. Those she could not save doubtless died blessing her. I could never look upon this quiet, pale couple without the greatest emotion.

They both got better at Therapia, but were always at work, and greatly improved the hospital arrangements. I was told that Mrs. M—— wished to return to the Crimea, but that her husband would not allow her, shattered in health and spirits as she was; and they have since started for England. They left with several poor soldiers, who could never speak of their untiring goodness without tears. The first day I visited the hospital there were many lying there very badly wounded, and neither noticing nor speak-

ing to any one; only you saw by the sad, pale face, as each lay in his little bed in the great room (once a part of a luxurious harem), how much they had suffered. Others, who were better, looked up with pleasure at English faces. One or two wished me "Good morning," but I could not utter a word for the first few minutes, and stood at one of the windows, wiping my eyes. Nothing could look cleaner and neater than the rows of little beds. Beside each of them was a small table, covered with a white cloth, on which stood a Bible and Prayer-book, the medicine-glass, and perhaps the watch, and some other little treasure belonging to the patient. One poor soldier had walked across from another room to see a comrade, on whose bed he sat, asking many a kind question, and bidding the pale, haggard face cheer up, though looking but little better himself. On the next bed to these, sat two mere shadows of men, feebly playing at dominoes, which they told me with delight were a present from her Majesty, and then showed me a backgammon-board, draughts, and some amusing and instructive books, which the Queen ("God bless her!" said the poor grateful fellows) had sent out to amuse her wounded soldiers at Therapia. It was really quite touching to see their thankfulness for all that was done for them, and how well they bore their sufferings, so far from home and kindred.

We went afterwards to walk in the garden, a large and formal one, its long straight walks ornamented with rows of fine orange and lemon trees in full bearing. On sunny benches here and there were seated the convalescents, enjoying the fresh air. A few were strolling quietly up and down, reading together with great interest an old and tattered English newspaper. From the formal part of the garden you soon wander into a wildly beautiful shrubbery, which reaches up to the hills of Therapia. This is really a lovely spot, and, what is rare in this country, the deep shade preserves the ferns and wild-flowers in freshest beauty. We walked with delight through a fine avenue of trees which reminded me of that in the garden of Boccaccio, the blue sky peeping through the interlaced branches above, and the sun just touching, here and there, leaves already tinged with the first gold of autumn. One of these fine avenues extends halfway up the hills, another crossing it, and forming a charming forest picture. Gathering some pretty specimens of ferns and wild-flowers, we came suddenly to a little valley enclosed with a low mud wall. Round it were ranged, in rows, about a hundred graves, each of which contains the bodies of many men, who have died of wounds in the hospital, or been brought down from the Crimea. They are all nameless, these long rows of clay; but in the centre of the valley, erected on three white

stone steps, stands a plain white cross, on which is inscribed, "I am the Resurrection and the Life;" and beneath this, "To the memory of those buried here, who fell in the Crimea; erected by their country-women at Therapia." Alone, at the upper end of this sad place, stands a solitary grey stone; on it is inscribed, "Captain Lyons. Her Majesty's ship Miranda."

Silently Mr. Evelyn and I sat down at the foot of an old tree. I believe that just then neither of us could have spoken a word. We had broken in, as it were, so suddenly upon the mournful resting-place, in a strange land, of our countrymen. How they had been prayed for! How many bitter tears were still shed for them in England! Could the dead speak, how many tender messages would they not send home from that harem-garden now by us, whose hearts ache over their lonely graves for them, and for those especially whom they have left behind! Mr. Evelyn told me of a friend and namesake of his, who was killed by the bursting of a shell, just before the assault,—a noble and promising young man, beloved by all. His father used to say, after he had left home, "My friend and companion, as well as my son, is gone." Mr. Evelyn said that the most painful task of his life was to write to this poor father, and convey to him his son's last message.

However I must tell you no more sad stories. We have heard enough to fill a volume, and to make the hardest heart ache. Young ladies, struck with the glitter of regimental dress, and the pleasantness of hearing the band play in the Park on a fine summer's day, would quite alter their opinion of the pomp and glory of war, were they only to see one-tenth part of its horror, and misery, and sorrow.

Mr. Evelyn hopes soon to return to his labours in the Crimea, which however we trust he will not attempt just yet, for he has been very near losing his life from fever, brought on by exposure and over-exertion, and has still a terrible cough, which even the fine air of Therapia does not cure. Besides attending to the sick and dying, he has had an evening school for the soldiers of his Division, and writes all the letters of those not able to do it for themselves.

The night before the assault, he and another chaplain administered the Sacrament to about fifty officers, at their own request. He said that the scene was a most impressive one,—in a large tent, lighted by a few candles stuck on bayonets. It is remarkable that, of the number gathered together on that momentous evening, almost all fell. But the evening was now drawing to a close, and with a long, lingering look round this little Valley of the Dead, we took our departure.

On reaching the end of the avenue, we found the garden-door of the hospital-palace locked. After knocking again and again, and beginning to despair of making ourselves heard (for the invalids must have left the garden long before this time), we heard footsteps rapidly coming along one of the long gravel-walks. I peeped through the keyhole of the huge and ponderous lock, and saw the Turkish gardener hurrying towards us. This good news I communicated to my friend, who, delicate as he was from recent illness, was already beginning to feel chilled by the evening air in this deep shade of trees. Unfortunately he too looked through the keyhole just as the Turkish gardener, bent on reconnoitring who was making the loud knocking, did the same. Pity it was not my ruddy face that met his view ! for a single glance at Mr. Evelyn's pale and worn one seemed to be enough. He sped away as if the shades of all the poor "Giaours" lying in the valley were after him. Seriously speaking, I have no doubt that he really mistook Mr. Evelyn for a good-looking shade—but still shade unmistakably ; and I dare say that nothing could have induced him to return, for the Turks are a singularly superstitious people. We could not help laughing at this very awkward dilemma ; however nothing remained but to make the best of it. Twilight only lasts a few minutes here, and the tall shadows

of the trees were rapidly mingling into darkness. So we again crossed the valley, and gaining the upper avenue, found another way home over the hills, descending through the village to our hotel by the Bosphorus.

## LETTER XI.

BEAUTY OF THE BOSPHORUS.—FISHING-VILLAGE ON THE ASIAN SHORE.—TURKISH CEMETERY AND GRAVES OF THE JANISSARIES.—RUINS OF THE CASTLE OF ANATOLIA.—TURKISH SOLDIERS.

Therapia, November 15th, 1855.

My dear Julia,

THE Bosphorus is certainly one of those beauties formed to turn all the heads in the world. She smiles, and nothing on earth can be more radiantly bright and sparkling ;—she is angry, and dashes along with a wild, untameable, yet graceful fury ; the hills around grow dark and sorrowful, and the tall cypress-trees wave their heads in stately submission to her stormy humour.

Some people think her most beautiful then, but others are enchanted with her quiet, dreamy moods, when she murmurs gently on the shore, and takes delight in picturing fairy-white palaces, and shady rose and orange-gardens, and fragrant branches wav-

ing in the scented wind. Or in the stiller nights, when she flashes back every touch with a gleam of gold, and sparkles with golden stars as she moves along in the pale grey light.

But you may tire of my attempt at description,—you never would of beholding the reality. Yesterday we took caique at Buyukdere, and crossed over to the Asiatic shore. I got some charming specimens for my collection of wild-flowers, and a beautiful bouquet of arbutus, laden with the richest berries. The arbutus grows wild on the hills and cliffs here, almost down to the seashore, and also many fine shrubs which would grace a garden. The Bosphorus was very rough, or we had planned rowing up to the mouth of the Black Sea; as it was, we landed with some difficulty at a little village beneath the ancient Castle of Anatolia. It was a most picturesque-looking place, and evidently a fishing-village. Numbers of gaily-painted caiques were drawn up on the shore, and from the lofty boughs of a group of enormous lime-trees, hung fishing-nets of great length and almost snowy whiteness. Numbers of broken-down wooden houses were clustered within the shade of the vast boughs. A few Turkish fishermen were seated on some large stones mending their nets, and many were resting before the door of a little *cafanée*, sipping coffee, and smoking with their usual sedateness. Here,

in the Asiatic villages, the people are more picturesque-looking than at Constantinople, and generally retain the beard, and many-coloured turban, which suits the eastern face so well. They are also much more shy of strangers. Even at Stamboul, little children will sometimes give you a friendly smile, or even call you "Bono Johnny;" but in Asia the little things generally dart a glance of hatred or fear, and mutter "Giaour" as they fly away from you. Their mothers too show great dislike of your noticing them, fearing the "evil eye" of Europeans.

But I am wandering from the ruins of the great Anatolian castle, which we came to see. It is built on the top of the mountainous range of hills overlooking the Black Sea; so you may fancy what a climb it was in the fierce heat of the day. When halfway up, we stopped in a beautiful but ruined cemetery, and sat down to rest by an ancient fountain. Some Turkish women were sitting there, but they hastily adjusted their veils, and retreated at our approach among the old and knotted cypress-trees. Higher up, through the dark funereal boughs, was the most lovely view that could be conceived of the blue winding Bosphorus, the hills and shipping of Therapia, and the great valley of Buyukdere. Some ancient graves of the Janissaries stood here, with huge and unmutilated turbaned stones. Sultan Mahmoud's vengeance had not

found them out in this sequestered place, and they still slept quietly on the spot which I dare say they had chosen in their days of greatness, with only a few timid sheep straying here and there to share possession with them.\*

Mr. Bell has a great desire to possess one of the very old turbaned stones, which I suppose it would be death to touch, especially in Asia. It is with difficulty that he can be induced to pass an ancient graveyard,—he looks with such longing eyes at the turban of a Janissary, especially if it happens to have any remains of the blue and gold inscription. Notwithstanding the difficulties in the way, I should be hardly surprised to see one on board the ‘Elba’ before she returns to England.

At last we reached the fine ruins of the castle, and wished you could have seen from the tower, the view of the wild rocky coast of the Black Sea, the opposite European shore and its ruined forts, the Giant’s Mountain, and all the softer, wooded beauty of the Bosphorus below. It was indeed a lovely sight, and well worth the sultry walk. The tower and walls and bastions of this castle are covered with the thickest and most beautiful ivy. On the lower walls wild vine

\* After the massacre of the Janissaries, Sultan Mahmoud ordered all the turbans on their headstones to be struck off. The headless stones are to be seen in almost all the cemeteries.

and fig-leaves of the ruined garden mingle with its dark foliage. A very pretty species of mountain-ash grows abundantly here, with large bunches of the most brilliant scarlet berries, which are shaded, almost transparent, and as fine as coral. A small patch of ground within the inner wall was strewn with melons and a few dried-up vegetables, evidently for the use of three or four miserable, wild-looking Turkish soldiers, who leaned over the ruined battlements of the tower, watching the flight of a couple of eagles wheeling slowly round and round, high in air. We managed to make one of these poor "sentries" understand a few words of Italian. We were "great English captains" he said, and hastened to offer one of his best melons. He afterwards looked with great curiosity at our glasses, so I fixed mine for him, and pointed to the distant eagle. He was positively frightened, cried out something to his companions, and could not be induced to look again, evidently thinking it something "uncanny." These poor soldiers, and a kind of shepherd-gardener, whose starved-looking flock were grazing on the adjoining hill, live in a rude kind of hut, erected inside the castle-keep, a most dreary abode, only lighted by a crumbling entrance in the wall. Looking up far into darkness one could only discover a gleam of light here and there. They said that immense numbers of bats and owls flew about at

night. Only fancy the desolateness of these poor fellows' lives ! A few piastres cheered them up wonderfully. It is said that the arms of Byzantium are still to be seen on this castle, but we were not fortunate enough to find them out. All I saw over one of the doorways was a large Genoese cross. In ancient times here stood the famous Temple of the Twelve Gods,—at least so says the learned "Murray," in whom every English traveller is bound to confide.

We had a delightful row back to Buyukdere, and again the good ship 'Elba' hospitably received us. A Colonel of the Turkish Contingent, had joined the party, whose chat about the camp was extremely entertaining. In these two or three stormy nights, many of the tents in the valley of Buyukdere have been flooded. The Colonel seemed to regret this the more on account of a Turkish hen, a prisoner-of-war, who lived under a kind of rude straw sofa in his tent, and seemed so amiably inclined to him that he always knew where to find a new-laid egg for his breakfast every morning. His cook is a wild Wallachian woman, who rides astride full speed through the camp; and he was in great spirits at having made the acquaintance of a poor Bim-Bashee (equal in rank to a Major in our service) of one of the regiments, who was happy to mend or patch for a "consideration."

Poor Colonel — showed me his only remaining

*yellow* cambric handkerchief, which had acquired this very unenviable tinge from having been washed by a Turkish soldier in a small hole cut in the clay hill-side of the camp. He has now got an Arab servant, a perfectly wild, but intelligent creature, whom he is endeavouring to teach cooking and washing,—two most valuable accomplishments here.

You would have been amused to see with what intense interest our new acquaintance listened to my instructions on the important subject of "how to make a pudding." After all, there must be a great deal of fun in camp life to those who enjoy the dignity of helping themselves. "The wise man's best servant and assistant is himself," struck me very much, even as a child, on reading the '*Fortunes of Nigel*'

## LETTER XII.

VILLAGE OF KADIKOI.—SEA OF MARMORA.—LANDING AT PERA.—  
STAMBOUL.—ITS SILENT STREETS.—BEHIND THE LATTICE.—  
THE SULTAN.—HIS KIND AND MERCIFUL DISPOSITION.—DESO-  
LATENESS OF CONSTANTINOPLE.—VARIABLE CLIMATE.—THE TURK-  
ISH LOAN.—CHOLERA AT YENEKION.

Therapia, November 10th, 1855.

My dearest Mother,

WE returned last evening from a visit to a village called Kadikoi. It is beyond Scutari, just where the Bosphorus becomes very wide and loses itself in the Sea of Marmora. This is the point where you sit in your caique as it bounds over the waves, quite lost in wonder at the extraordinary beauty, the dream-like loveliness of the place, of which nothing but actual beholding can give you the faintest idea. Perhaps in a dream I may see again, when in England, this very place, where the Bosphorus and the old Propontis meet; I may again feel the delightful undulation of the caique on the dark blue water—again see beautiful

Stamboul, with its snow-white minarets and dark cypresses rising as it were from the waves,—ships of all nations floating by,—Princes' Islands and shadowy Mount Olympus like grey clouds in the distance; on the other side, seeming to rise out of the sea too, Pera and the tower of Galata, and the dark green funereal trees of the great burial-ground.

The “Maiden’s Tower” stands on a rock in the sea, off the steep cliffs of Scutari. You must either *see* this place, or *dream* it after a dose of opium or lotus-eating. No pen, no artist can paint it.

But what an awakening it is to land at Pera! Such a motley crowd, such a jostling, such a confusion of tongues and of cries, such diet, it is utterly impossible to conceive.

This is, as you know, the “Frank” quarter, thronged with people of many nations. If you land at Stamboul, you find the landing-place crowded with caïques and Greek boats, and hundreds of people hurrying up the narrow street leading to the bazaars,—*hamals*, or porters, laden with huge bales of wool and other merchandise. But turn right or left out of this busy path, and you find yourself as it were in a city of the dead,—closed lattices, and not a sound to disturb the profound silence of the steep and narrow streets, across which sometimes trails a neglected trellised vine. After a long ramble one day, Mr. Bell and I

sat down on an ancient fountain-stone in this silent region. Opposite to us, on the right, was a vacant space caused by a fire, over which fig-trees and creeping plants grew in uninterrupted wildness and luxuriance. Exactly opposite to the poor weary travellers was a dark red and closely-latticed wooden house, most picturesquely decayed-looking. Presently a veiled black slave came out, and carefully closing the door, gave a suspicious glance at the "Giaours," and shuffled mysteriously out of sight. A little red-and-white kitten had evidently wished to come into the street with her; but when it saw us, it started back as if in fear of the "infidels." All the time we sat there, we saw one of its little golden eyes peeping at us through a hole in the old iron-bound door. We were very tired, so there we sat a long time, saying what a curious, silent, drowsy, and picturesque place it was, when we saw a little square bit of the trellis-work lattice quietly open, and a pair of black eyes looked down upon us through the thick white folds of a yashmak. We did not speak, and sat just as children do, scarcely daring to breathe, when a strange bird hops by which they are anxious not to scare away. The black eyes evidently scanned us both from head to foot; but presently a turbaned head crossed the lattice, and they suddenly disappeared. Mr. Turk now opened the lattice a little wider, and

seemed so well pleased with his view, that Mr. Bell at length broke silence by suggesting that it would be rather awkward, alone as we were, if he were to come down and insist upon buying me at once. Mr. Bell and I are famous for making each other laugh, and here was an end of our gravity at once. The black eyes again returned to the lattice, but we could see by the wreaths of white smoke that *Mylord* was close by. It seemed to us that this silent pantomime meant, "If you look at *her*, I *will* look at *him* ;" for the black eyes now fixed themselves on the good-looking and susceptible Mr. Bell in the most determined and tender manner ; so that out of regard to his peace of mind, I thought it better to rise from the old stone and go on our way, which we did.

Both of us however being rather flattered with such evident and novel admiration, we consulted together as to the expediency of waving an adieu,—I to the turban, he to the black eyes and yashmak. But we were alone in the very heart of silent Stamboul, and not able to speak a word of the language ; so I advised Mr. Bell to keep his head comfortably on his shoulders, and to depart with no other demonstration to the lovely black eyes than a sorrowful look. This he agreed to, provided that I did the same ; to which I consented, after some disputation as to the "difference" in the way of danger. And we

climbed on through another silent street, where only a blind woman sat on the door-step to a small cemetery, where a few blue and gilt turbanned stones could be seen through the thick shade of cypress and flowers, surrounded by a rusty iron railing, trellised for birds. The next turn brought us to a coffee and sherbet shop, and we made signs of being thirsty. The drowsy Turks smoke their chibouques, and look at you so quietly from their divans. I greatly enjoyed that first walk in Stamboul. One is always reminded of the Arabian Nights. By the bye, when we write to ask you to send out the winter clothing, etc., will you send me a copy of that book? it ought to be read *here*. Please not to forget. I will tell you how to send the parcel.

Tell Edie that I was so much amused that day at Stamboul by a parrot, just like ours at home. She was hanging in a gaudily painted cage, inside a Turkish sweetmeat shop. As I passed by I said, "Poor Poll!" for she looked very dull, and heedless of the veiled women and Turkish children passing in and out. You can hardly imagine the delight of the poor bird at the sound of my voice. She screamed, and danced about her cage, like a mad thing, trying to fly to me all the time. I could only suppose that she had been *brought up* English, and was charmed by the sound of the language of her early sailor-days,

before being sold at Constantinople and consigned to silent Stamboul,—not a cheerful place for a parrot, I should think !

We came home by the Mosque of St. Sophia, and by the outer garden of the Seraglio, where we again rested, and a Turkish gardener gave me some flowers and a handful of fine walnuts. This ground is to the Seraglio, what Birdcage Walk is to Buckingham Palace : I mean only in its nearness, for the ground is hilly and the walls fortified. It would be a beautiful place to walk about in, for the cypress and other trees are very fine, and the view charming all down by Scutari ; but you constantly regret the untidy and uncared-for exterior of all palaces and mosques here, except the entrances by the Bosphorus. These are beautiful quays, with vases of flowers, and inner marble courts, fountains, and gardens shining through the trellised arches of the walls, all in the most perfect order, as I am told the interior of the houses are. I am promised introductions to one or two great Turkish hareems ; then I shall be able to tell you much.

Dr. Zohrab, who is the Sultan's physician, said at dinner yesterday that he hoped to be able to take me to the marriage of the Sultan's daughter, which will be a most magnificent sight, but is not to take place just yet. Dr. Zohrab is much attached to the Sultan,

and indignant at the slanders which those opposed to his wish for civilization and improvement (he declares) invent. The Sultan is, he says, slightly paralyzed from extreme debility and ill-health, and this his enemies pretend to attribute to intemperance. He is very accessible to his subjects, and would be to people of any nation, if his intriguing ministers did not do all in their power to prevent it. All agree in speaking of his merciful disposition : he has never yet been induced to sign a death-warrant. You see that I can but write to you all at home what I hear from the most credible sources ; it is most difficult in this country to come at the truth. However, as far as regards the Sultan, I should really think he is a good but a weak man, who cannot do what he would, for fear of his thieving and fanatical Ministers. His chief delight is his new palace at Dolma Batche. Mrs. Sanderson tells me that the palace at Bahjoh is just like those in the Arabian Nights, the most beautiful you can conceive. Dr. Zohrab says that he is too good for a Sultan, and is "almost an angel." Madame — is one of the many who decidedly affirm that he is a drunkard ; but she is a Greek, and a would-be *diplomate*, and Dr. Zohrab is a fine, rough, independent, but good and affectionate man, who would, I am sure, defend neither prince nor peasant if he thought them wrong. From the Bosphorus this

palace looks very lovely. By the way, many of the Sultanases at the palace of Tscheran are being taught to read, and several are proud of being able to spell over the 'Thousand-and-one Nights.' Poor things! what a useful education to give them! however it is a step. They are also taught music and dancing, and all practise on different instruments in the same hall at the same time! A lady who heard it in passing the palace told me what an awful noise it was.

We hear a great deal of what is going on both in Turkish and European affairs here from —. As you may imagine, it is a great comfort to be really intimate with so clever, good, and kind-hearted a person in a country like this, which, in spite of the great beauty of the scenery, is desolate enough to live in. After the novelty has passed off, there is a sense of extreme dreariness here. Like the beauty of the day when the chilly nights come on, so vanish all your thoughts of trying to be content, directly your day's work or your day's expedition is over, and you heartily hate the place and long to be at home. Then the climate is so changeable, that a sense of its danger must always create a sort of melancholy, and aversion to remain a day longer than is positively necessary. In the morning, or even in the afternoon, when you start on a short journey, the brightest sunshine and the freshest breeze make you exclaim, "What *can* be

finer or healthier than this?" A change in the wind, or a few minutes after sunset, sends you shivering home with every symptom of a sore-throat, and pains in every limb. You put your hand up to your forehead and find a few drops of cold water quietly trickling down. However these symptoms are more felt on first arriving. We are now not nearly so sensitive to changes of temperature as we were, and better understand to manage our clothing, always carrying cloaks when frying in the sun, that they may be ready for the cold of three hours after. The weather has been oppressively close and hot these three weeks; but last night we heard the wind come roaring down from the Black Sea; violent rain followed, and *it is* winter this morning. Edmund had to go to Ortakioy, and it looked so threatening that I made him promise to stay all night, and am glad to have done so, for it is now just about the time he will have arrived at his friend's house, and the storm is frightful,—the Bosphorus like a raging sea, the waves dashing right over the stone pathway against the houses. Not a caique could venture out. I have just been watching a man-of-war's boat with sixteen rowers and a sail, trying to reach the shore, which they have done with great difficulty. A part of the French fleet is anchored just off here, and also several Sardinian vessels. I was going down to Kandelij today, but

think it more prudent to remain at home. The Sardinian Commodore here, Signor di Negri, kindly offered to bring me up his little steamer, rather than that I should be disappointed ; but the wind increases every moment, and for mere pleasure, one would not brave what, they say, the Bosphorus *can* do.

I told you what gentlemanly, well-informed men the Sardinian officers are. This Signor di Negri is a delightful acquaintance. I now speak Italian with fluency, holding long conversations, and find it of great use, especially amongst the Greeks, most of whom understand it sufficiently to get you what you want. It is wonderful to see how completely the Greeks put us to shame with respect to languages ; they speak several foreign ones as a matter of course, while we generally think so much of it.

As to the Commission, nothing has been done as yet. You know that I told you of Edmund's satisfactory interviews with Fuad Pasha, and the number of diamond-mounted chibouques which his two colleagues, M. Cadrossi and Caboul Effendi, smoked with that worthy Minister for Foreign Affairs. Still, we now find the value of our acquaintance among the English merchants who speak Turkish. First of all we heard that it was said by the Turks that Mr. Hornby and Monsieur Cadrossi were quiet, gentlemanly men whom, no doubt, it would be easy to

manage in their own way. After further negotiation however, and after Edmund's proposals and plans of operation were sent in, it seems that they changed their opinion as to the firmness of the English and French Commissioners; for an English merchant, who has lived here many years and speaks Turkish fluently, tells us that there is a great feeling of anger among the Turks about the Commission; that they are bent (three or four of them especially, who are furious at the idea of not being able to finger some thousands for their own private purse) on getting the whole of the loan into their own hands; that they declare they will never consent to disgrace the Ottoman Government by asking foreign Commissioners' consent to their spending their own money, and that they are resolved to tire their patience out. How all this will end remains to be seen. Of course they well know that it was only on the solemn agreement that England and France should direct the disbursement of the money, that it was lent. There are five millions here in gold now. Edmund is going to send a despatch begging that no more instalments should be sent out, and he will take care to let it be known that he has done so. As yet no money has been applied for by the Turks. It is a great charge to the Commissariat to have so much gold in keeping, especially infested as Constantinople now is by

rogues of the deepest dye, of the dregs of all nations.

I am very glad, as it happens, that we are not to winter at Pera. The streets are so crowded that it is easy enough even to murder in the confusion of dusk, with no lights and a broken-up pavement. A French officer was stabbed coming out of the Opera-house three or four nights ago: another was knocked on the head and robbed of his watch, about six in the evening, in the streets of Pera. Both these unfortunate men died on the spot, and the murderers have not been discovered. The French are very angry, and insist on having guards of their own in all the streets, as the Turks will not be at the trouble of doing so. A band of Greek robbers, disguised as English sailors, and who speak English perfectly well, are known to infest Pera, and to have perpetrated many outrages and robberies. It is confidently said that the Turkish authorities know who they are very well, and could take them if they liked. However, the French are *now* bent on taking active measures; but it is as yet not safe to venture out at Pera after dark, unless armed and escorted. I am thankful that Edmund is not compelled to run the risk. I feel now so glad to be with him. I often think that, if he were alone, he might naturally be tempted to go to the Opera, bad as it is, and so run the double danger of assassins

and night air. As it is, we are always in by sunset, and after a quiet chat with our present fellow-prisoners, Lady Robinson and Signor di Negri, or reading an hour after dinner, we go to our own room and talk of Edie and you all in England till bedtime. The hotel here is now nearly empty ; there remain only the two I just mentioned, a lady who is soon leaving for Scutari to join her husband, and Mr. Gisborne, who has been here since we first arrived,—our long-standing, long-suffering colleague. Mr. Gisborne is on his way to Egypt (if he ever finishes his business here), to get permission to establish a telegraph. But he is in despair with the Turks. What you could do in five hours in any other place, you may think yourself fortunate to get done here in five months.

I left off writing here yesterday, as Edmund had ridden back from Orta-kioy and was thoroughly soaked. Dry clothes and a cup of tea soon put him all right again, and in an hour he went in to dinner. Several travellers came in, terribly knocked about by the storm on the Black Sea and the Bosphorus, and we felt grateful enough to be safely housed. I suppose none of the French officers just arrived in Beicos Bay could get on shore, for we saw none of them at dinner.

Just as we had finished our second course, the dining-room door opened to admit an English officer

whose dripping cloak was taken by the waiters, and who sat down to the table, with great satisfaction, after having warmed his hands at the stove. The entrance of a Crimean hero at dinner-time would not be quietly taken as a matter of course in England as it is here. A few days ago a fine-looking French officer sat opposite to us at table. I was the only lady present, so he rose and most politely asked permission to wear his cap, as he was suffering from a severe cold. We thought he looked very melancholy, and Edmund talked to him. His only brother had died the day before of cholera at Yenekion. They had both fought in the Crimea together. He tried to bear it manfully, but it seemed as much as he could do, poor fellow ! The Sardinians had the cholera amongst them at Yenekion ; unfortunately, four or five were brought down from the Crimea, and care was not taken to keep them apart : it spread into the village and many died. We were walking there when these poor fellows were carried from their ship.

Of course no one went near Yenekion who could help it, when these cases of cholera were heard of. Even the caiquejees, in rowing up the Bosphorus, kept at a respectful distance. They say that the village is quite healthy now, and these wintry storms will keep all well. It is only amongst crowds that the cholera ever seems to break out, and the thing

you most wonder at in seeing the hive-like clusters of houses where the poor live, is that they can live or breathe at all. Even in the streets of these villages you feel stifled; and the people throw dead animals into the Bosphorus, which in calm and hot weather smell dreadfully under the very doors and windows. I am sorry to say that the English, French, and even Sardinians, show them a bad example in this respect, for they throw overboard from the transports any animal which dies on board, and the quantity of these, from the great number of transports of the various commissariats, is considerable.

The beautiful walk by the seashore to Buyukdere was completely spoiled to us by this disgusting practice. At one time there were three or four dead horses, two cows, and several sheep, washing backwards and forwards on the shore. These were all from the English transports. Now that the Contingent is gone, we can take a pleasant morning's walk, and nothing can be more lovely. I hope by this time Mr. Bell has shown you some of his sketches, which are excellent, although no one can paint the Bosphorus. We are going to send home, on some safe opportunity, a few photographs of this place, which are about as good as a photograph of a beautiful face without its bright colouring.

## LETTER XIII.

PALACE OF THE SULTAN AT BEGLER BAY.—THE BOSPHORUS AFTER THE ATTACK ON SEBASTOPOL.—DIFFICULTY OF TRANSACTING BUSINESS WITH A TURKISH MINISTREY.—WRETCHED STATE OF TURKISH AFFAIRS.—CAIQUEJES, THEIR DRESS AND APPEARANCE.—“BONO” AND “NO BONO.”—A PROPOSED KIOSK AT ORTA-KIOY.

My dear Mother,

I HAVE just returned from the opposite Asian shore, where I have again been exploring the palace built by the Viceroy of Egypt, and presented by him to the Sultan. It is unfinished and deserted, and will most probably be allowed to fall to the ground, after vast sums of money have evidently been lavished upon it; the doors were wide open, and a number of sheep and goats either gambolling about or dozing in the spacious hall. Many of the rooms are truly magnificent, with fine coloured marble floors, but the painting, or rather daubing, of the walls and ceilings is the most tawdry and barbarous

that can be conceived. The view on all sides is enchanting, and on all sides different ; you turn from the lofty plane-trees of the Sultan's Valley and the wild hills of Asia, to a sea-view of great extent. It was a fine sight here just after the attack on Sebastopol ; the Bosphorus was literally crowded with ships ; one day we counted, slowly steaming up, fifteen immense transports, French and English. Today it was a south wind, and the full white sails of several ships had a most beautiful effect, slowly and majestically moving up between the dark green shores, the sky brilliantly tinted with rose-colour, and the water of its usual lovely blue.

Lady Robinson is as much charmed with this place as I am, and we take many pleasant excursions together. Edmund is getting anxious and dispirited at the very great difficulties he has to encounter with the Turkish Ministry, and can seldom join us now ; indeed it is impossible to conceive their corrupt, degraded, and shameful way of proceeding, unless actually before your eyes every day. It is harassing and heartless work, especially to an active-minded man, sitting day after day on a divan, smoking an immense chibouque, and dragging out a few words of business in a dreamy kind of way at intervals of about half an hour. The worst part is, that he and his colleague, after weeks of anxiety, feel that they

have as yet gained nothing, and have only been *finessed* with. What must not Lord Stratford have borne in all the years he has been here ! However, the Commission are fully resolved to be firm, and to do their best to prevent the money of the loan being spent on diamond necklaces or new slaves ; although it is certainly said here that, long before the arrival of the gold, certain members of the Turkish Ministry had obtained advances from their Saraffs at high interest, in anticipation of their share of the plunder. A Greek banker, supposed to be one of the lenders, himself told us so, beside one or two other persons.

Everything here is in the most deplorable state ; the Sultan is deeply in debt, even at the bazaars, for the dress and jewels of his numerous Seraglio, yet he still persists in spending vast sums in building new palaces and making presents. The public buildings, once revered mosques and fountains, are wretchedly dilapidated and neglected-looking ; the soldiers, meagre, dejected, miserably clothed, and worse armed. Edmund heard at the Porte the other day that Omar Pasha had written to the Seraskier (Minister of War), bitterly complaining that for many months his troops had received no pay, and were beginning to get dispirited and doubtful of his promises, which was most unfortunate just at a moment when their services might be required. On investigation it was disco-

vered that the General had written twice before, that a large sum of money had been remitted which he had never received, and that the receipt, apparently in his handwriting, had been forged.

This must have been done by some one placed very near him it is said, but no inquiry has been made as to the guilty person. Major Fellowes was saying the other day, that English officers ought to be appointed to pay the Turkish soldiers, as it is notorious that for months the poor fellows are cheated in the most daring manner by Turkish officers high in command. The Turkish soldier is in general profoundly ignorant, with no idea of reckoning; if the paymaster gives him five shillings instead of five pounds, he takes them silently—only he becomes in time dispirited. Their Commissariat also cheat them in the most heartless and disgraceful manner; but, though done in the broad face of day, these things are unnoticed here. All officials being corrupt, a man who robs by hundreds or even thousands, is not likely to place any check upon the crowds of paltry pilferers below him. To shame, a Turkish Ministry is perfectly indifferent; and from all one hears, the restoration of Mehemet Ali is a new proof of this. What he must be, to be distinguished for vice and cruelty here, it is difficult for an English mind to conceive. Although the Sultan's brother-in-law, he is but just

recalled from banishment, and reinstated in his post of Capitan Pasha, or Lord High Admiral. He was once a slave and butcher-boy. Sultan Mahmoud happened to see and take a fancy to him, and gave him an appointment in the palace.

One thing which strikes you here is the vast superiority of the poor over the rich. The poor are really the aristocracy of the country, both physically and morally. For his dignified bearing and manners, a poor man might be an emperor: he is honest, laborious, and most abstemious. A year or two of “place” under this disgraceful system, and the curious turns of fortune here, enervate and degrade him in body and mind. There seems no honest work for honest men to do, except to rear a few grapes and melons, to row a caique, or bear heavy burdens on their backs. The whole system is one of bribery and corruption, and a “place” can only be kept by doing as others do. The most amusing thing is that the Turks boast of the fine code of laws, which they certainly possess, and which is about of as much use to the wretched people as the Queen’s jewels in the Tower are to our village belles on May-day.

Colonel Hinde, who is well acquainted with all classes here, was saying the other day that the respectable people were the caiquejees, the hamals, and the banditti, who are usually those that have been driven

"to the mountains" by some act of cruelty and oppression. Of the latter I cannot give an opinion, not having yet had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of any of them. The caiquejees are the most magnificent men in the world, sunburnt of a fine bronze-colour. Their summer dress is a wide-sleeved jacket and trousers of white Broussa gauze (something between a thick gauze and muslin), which contrasts well with the scarlet fez and its large purple silk tassel. Here and there are seen one or two of the old school, with turban and fine long beard, which adds greatly to the nobility and picturesqueness of their appearance.

There is one particularly grand-looking old man, whom I often notice at Tophana. He wears a green turban, showing him to be a descendant of the Prophet, and has a silvery beard, which makes it difficult not to bow to him as to some ancient hero. He certainly might be Sultan Amurath, or Murad of the "great soul, patient of labours," moving about silently amongst his people again.

I cannot discover that the caiquejees have any songs peculiar to themselves, like those of Venetian gondoliers, or the Neapolitan fishermen. Their voices in speaking, especially those of the Turks, are very rich and sonorous; but, to our ears, all voices, in this country, in singing are far from melodious. I often

hear them chanting in a minor key, but it is harsh, monotonous, and grating.

The caiqueejes seem to be generally quiet, peaceable men ; but when they *do* quarrel before our windows, their torrent of anger is something marvellous. Resting on their oars, a few yards apart, they pour forth an avalanche of wrath with the most inconceivable rapidity and violence ; the long sentences seeming to have no resting-places, where you could throw in the tenth part of a comma, or even take breath. The storm usually subsides, just as those on the Bosphorus itself, as suddenly as it came on, and each gentleman rows majestically on his way, looking calm and unruffled as usual. Although so strong and muscular, a crust of brown bread, and a melon or bunch of grapes, is their usual summer repast, with an occasional dish of pilauf.—*i. e.* rice boiled with a few tomatoes, to colour it, and mixed with scraps of meat.

Some of them, especially the Greeks, speak a little Italian or French ; but signs, “*bono*,” or “*no bono*” (nobody condescends to say “*buono*”), and “*Johnny*,” does everything here since the war began. I heard one of them say to an English officer the other day, “*Coom Johnny !*” in a most persuasive manner, and “*Johnny*” threw himself discontentedly into the painted and gilt caique, calling it a “*confounded egg-*

shell," and not seeming at all happy in the arrangement of his long legs and great sword.

This is our last week at Therapia. The steamers cannot always run in the winter; a caique would be impossible in stormy weather; and, as there are no roads, it would be much too far for Edmund to ride night and morning to his "chambers" at Stamboul. So we have taken a pretty little kiosk, halfway up the hill of Orta-kioy, a village about seven miles from Constantinople; and I shall soon be launched into all the difficulties of English housekeeping in the East. We have bought Colonel Pitt's kit and pack-saddle; a few tables and chairs, a kettle, saucepans, plates, etc., from Pera, of an intelligent little German there; nice mattresses and pretty quilts from the bazaar at Stamboul; Turkish coffee-cups in their tiny stands; chibouques with amber mouthpieces; a nargileh, and a little brasier for charcoal. This, with a divan, and a lovely view of the Bosphorus, will be indeed charming—a kind of perpetual picnic. General Beatson's little daughters have given me their three pretty canaries, which have been camping it at the Dardanelles with them all the summer, and are exceedingly tame. I told you that the General, with a glittering staff of Bashi-Bazouks, has been staying here; and how sorry I was when Mrs. Beatson and her charming little girls left for Malta. They were so kind and

gentle in-doors, that one could scarcely believe them to be the same children who rode the most fiery Arab horses over the Osmanli camp, to the surprise and admiration of their father's wild troops, who positively adored them.

Although there are many discomforts in living this kind of camp life at an hotel, I shall be sorry to leave Therapia,—gay, beautiful, sparkling Therapia,—for a half-burnt-down Turkish village. Lord and Lady Stratford de Redcliffe are very kind to us, and there are several English people here whom we know, and our Sardinian Commodore, and good Doctor Zohrab, and Madame Baltazzi's beautiful garden, in which I often stroll with her, and the walk to Buyukdere, with the white tents and little red flags looking down on one from the hills, reminding one of pleasant days at Chobham, and "church" on Sunday mornings at the hospital with the poor invalid soldiers. How much more there always seems to be to leave in a place, just as you are going !

## LETTER XIV.

STORMY WEATHER.—STORMS IN THE BLACK SEA.—LOSS OF SARDIAN TROOPS.—REMOVAL TO ORTA-KIOY.—VOYAGE.—ROUGH SEA.—ARRIVAL.—DIFFICULTIES.—ARMENIAN NEIGHBOURS.—FIRE-GUNS AT NIGHT.—ROLL OF DRUMS AND DISCHARGE OF MUSKETRY AT THE SULTAN'S PALACE AT DAYBREAK.

Orta-kioy, November 24th, 1855.

My dear Mother,

EDMUND is gone to Stamboul today for a meeting of the Commissioners at Fuad Pasha's. He will call at the Embassy on his return, and as two Mails have arrived, we hope to receive letters. The French Mail was due five days ago, and, it being stormy weather, her non-appearance caused great anxiety here. It seems that she broke her screw in the Dardanelles, and was obliged to put in.

Our neighbour, Mr. Barker, was expecting a young lady, a distant relative, from England, coming out to be married here to an English officer who had obtained a few days' leave of absence from Balaklava to

come to Orta-kioy. He has been beating about for some days in the Black Sea, and she, detained by the accident to the French steamer, so that neither of the poor things have yet arrived, although anxiously expected by the whole family.

Now I must tell you something of our grand "move" from Therapia. We paid our visits of adieu, and then packed up, with stout but misgiving hearts, agreeing that whatever might happen to us, nothing could be so bad as the noise, and terrible expense of the hotels in this time of war, especially for a continuance.

Unfortunately, on the morning we were to start, Edmund had an unforeseen appointment at Stamboul : so I must start alone, we thought ; for "our Commodore," Signor di Negri, who had kindly offered to put me in his beautiful little steamer, baggage and all, was obliged to go cruising about in the Black Sea, to look for a vessel from Balaklava, which, it was reported, had gone down in the late storm, with all the Sardinian invalids on board, who were returning home. This, I regret to say, has turned out to be too true. Poor Signor di Negri is sadly grieved about his fellow-officers and countrymen.

It was a very stormy morning. I said good-bye to Lady Robinson, who was starting for England with her invalid son. He came down sick from the Crimea

after the taking of Sebastopol, when all the previous anxiety and excitement was over, and many broke down. He had slept in the trenches the night before the attack, fearing that from weakness caused by fever, he should be unable to return when his time came round again, and giving his cloak to a poor wounded soldier, had a relapse himself, in consequence of exposure to the chilly night-air. He has suffered very much here, and certainly needed his mother's devoted nursing. This morning he was lying on the sofa, dressed, the first time for weeks, in regimentals, which hung loosely upon him, and trying to recover from the fatigue of getting up, before the caique should come to put them on board ship for England, and the home which they were so anxious to reach, after much suffering and anxiety. We were so glad, and yet so sorry, to see them off.

The Bosphorus was rough, and it looked so stormy that I felt a little anxious about my voyage to Ortakioy, short as it was. However, Edmund found me a kind and efficient escort ; so we started,—Edmund mounted on Turk, and bound for Stamboul ; M—— and I in a two-oared caique ; our luggage, including the much-prized “kit,” in Signor Patela’s Maltese boat, manned by two sturdy Greeks, and the white sail set. The canaries, being Bashi-Bazouks, and accustomed to move about, seemed to enjoy the

fun ; but, tell Edith, my poor little Turkish goldfinch fluttered, and spoiled his gay wings sadly.

We got on very well for some distance, the wind being in our favour, but the Bosphorus was angry indeed, and, in one of the strong currents, "snap" went an oar. I was glad enough not to be alone. M—— was very angry that the men had not the usual spare one ; and when it was too late, we noticed the leaky and crazy state of the caique. The weather looked still more threatening, and as Therapia was yet in sight, M—— ordered the boatmen to turn back ; but the wind had increased so much, that it would have been difficult, even with the two pairs of oars, to have rowed against that and the current too. So nothing remained but to follow the dancing white sail of the little Maltese boat, now far before us, and to pull on towards Orta-kioy. M—— assured me that he was a first-rate swimmer ; and in case of our being upset, I fixed upon a nice strong piece of his coat, on which we agreed that I should hold fast and quietly while he swam ashore. He swims in the Bosphorus every morning, and knows its rapid and treacherous currents well ; but it was not fated on this day that we should dance on the waves together. However we got wet enough, notwithstanding cloaks ; for two dark clouds, tired of hanging over the cypresses of Kandelij, threw themselves precipitately

from the Asian hills into the Bosphorus : in western language, there was a tremendous shower.

Our caïque was half filled, and ourselves completely drenched. You must know that we had an umbrella, and that, sitting at the bottom of the boat, as one does here, we ought not to have got so wet, about the shoulders at least ; but M—— is in love, quite hopelessly, and quite “in secret.” Whether the rain made him more desponding or not, I do not know. It is very hard, but, wet or dry, people always make me their *confidante* in these matters. M—— wrapped me kindly in his cloak, then pulling it so as to let all the water in, and sighing like Romeo himself, began to tell me his sad story, to which I listened with an interest not even interrupted by a wave dashing the spray into our faces now and then, or a little stream of water pouring into my shoe. But at one part of the relation of his outraged feelings, I visibly shuddered, and my pity filled his handsome Greek eyes with tears. He was holding the umbrella on one side,—infatuated youth!—and a thread-like stream of ice-cold water was trickling down the back of my neck. In another quarter of an hour, the story and the shower-bath were both over, and we landed in brilliant sunshine, on the little wooden quay of Orta-kioy, where, among caïquejees mopping and drying their caïques, and a few Turks, with rich-coloured turbans, quietly mend-

ing their nets, or fishing with a line twined round the hand, stood our kind friend Mr. Barker, who had come to greet and welcome me, thinking I might be alone. We stopped a moment to admire the beautiful snow-white mosque, with two minarets, which the Sultan has just built here; and then, through the filthiest village I had yet seen, looking still more desolate from having been half burnt down about a year ago, and not yet rebuilt, the bakers still selling their bread under dripping and ragged tents, and the wild-dogs snapping and shivering in the ruins of the houses, we toiled up the hill.

For a moment my spirits fell, and I thought to myself, "How long will it be our fate to live in this wretched place?" However, when we arrived at the pretty little house, shut-in in a nice garden, it did not seem so bad. Mr. Barker and I went in, while M—— kindly saw that the Maltese boat gave up its load in safety to the hamals, who were soon seen toiling up the hill with the cherished "kit," etc., on their backs, our canaries, portmanteaus, and the goldfinch.

The Greek maid, Calliope, had arrived, all smiles and chatter. She was recommended to us by a Greek lady of our acquaintance, who declares that the sister, Diamanti, now living with her, is also a "treasure." I did not much like the look of her, although she certainly improves a little on acquaintance.

After changing what I could of my wet garments, I took a survey of what had arrived from Pera. First of all, no provisions ; not one thing of the list I had made a week ago ; no tables, no chairs, no linen, no cook. It was “supposed,” smilingly, by Calliope, that that functionary had been offered higher wages and had gone to the Crimea, where he had been before with a French General. Calliope was worse than useless, and said that she would not go into that miserable-looking Turkish village alone for the world. She is from Smyrna.

I was in great distress at the thought of Edmund coming home after a hard day's work, and finding nothing ready. Our bedding was the only thing that had arrived, and Mr. Barker kindly sallied forth to look for an Armenian Jew of the village, who professed a little carpentering. When he was gone, in stalked, up the stairs, into the salaamlik where I was, slipshod and in single file, the Armenian lady next-door, to whom the house belongs, two daughters, and three sons, who each saluted me after the Eastern fashion, touching the lips and forehead : which means, metaphorically, “I gather up dirt, I eat it, and cast it on my head, in sign of submission and respect to you.”

I motioned with my hand to the divan, upon which, with many bows and much ceremony, they at last

seated themselves, all in a row. I don't know whether they spoke Turkish or Armenian, and it signified little to me, who could understand not one single word of either.

It was certainly a trial of patience, with so much to do, to sit quietly and courteously to be stared at from head to foot, to have one's mantle, dress, and collar both felt and examined ; and observations made thereon, both *viv<sup>d</sup> voce* and translated in dumb-show to the three poor mutes, who nodded and grunted in a most distressing manner. I think I told you that three of the poor lady's children are dumb. I never felt more perplexed and uncomfortable in my life, and was glad when Mr. Barker came back ; with no Jew however (for he had forgotten that it was Saturday), but much better still, he had brought his daughter, who speaks both English and Greek perfectly well. She was greatly concerned at my helpless condition ; for Mistress Calliope had now put on a smart jacket, and twisted a gay Greek handkerchief round her thick plaits of hair, and was quietly seated on the divan, answering all the questions of the Armenian ladies about us. Kind Miss Barker soon gave her a hint that such behaviour would never do with English people, and she presently condescended to stroll away. But still there was no one even to help me do a single thing ; worst of all, nothing to eat when dinner-

time came, and a dripping, ruined village beneath our windows, which looked as if a mouse might easily starve there.

At last, to my great joy, I saw Mr. Grace's manservant coming up the hill, sent most kindly by his master to us from Kandelij. He had got a basket, "in case our provisions should not have arrived," containing wine, coffee, nice rolls, and several other things for luncheon. But still more welcome were his intelligent, working face, and his three languages.

First of all he despatched the Armenians, told Calliope that she had better prevent me from lifting things about myself, than sit chattering there, helped me to unpack the kit and portmanteaus, lighted the kitchen charcoal-stoves, and then sallied forth into the village. To look into the basket on his return from that heap of ruins was "*pro-di-gi-ous*." First of all, a dish of fine red mullet, then an excellent fowl, a tiny leg of mutton, weighing about three pounds and a half, some delicious vegetables, grapes, and pomegranates, and a bunch of sweet autumn flowers.

When Edmund came home, he found an excellent little dinner (at which our good genius and the now smiling Calliope waited), and the salaamlik quite gay. We had borrowed a good-sized table from the Armenian lady, and a smaller one, on which stood the flowers in a Turkish vase, and the little "Bashi-Bazouks"

singing merrily. I had a camp-stool to myself, and Edmund sat like a Turk on the divan. We afterwards had some coffee in one of the tin mugs of our beloved kit, and then made up as good a kind of gipsy encampment as we could for the night, on the divans of the different rooms. Calliope melted into tears at the departure of our excellent Greek ally, who, when he had done all he could for us, returned in his caique to Kadelij.

At night, just as I was going to sleep, the windows shook with the heavy report of a cannon. My first thought was of Russian ships having passed the entrance of the Bosphorus ; but I soon recollect ed the fire-guns of which I had heard. The heavy crash of seven of them, at regular intervals of a few seconds, broke on the quiet night ; and then the peculiar wailing cry of the watchmen, in different parts of the village, announcing fire, and the striking of their staves on the stones close by our door, effectually banished sleep for some time. Before dawn the Armenian watchman chanted to prayers at the doors of the latticed house opposite, and of those above us. It is a peculiar, wailing chant in the minor, and strikes one as intensely melancholy at first ; one of them begins, I am told, “ Prayer is better than sleep.” Then, just as darkness is fading into the pale, grey light of daybreak, the discharge of musketry and the roll of

drums is plainly heard from the Sultan's palace at Tcheran, followed by some lively Turkish airs with drums and fifes. This announces that the "Commander of the Faithful" is rising to prayers; and soon the powerful chant of the Muezzin is heard pealing up the valley from the minarets below. You can scarcely imagine how strange it seems to be surrounded by such unfamiliar sounds, especially in the night-time.

## LETTER XV.

ORTA-KIOY.—SERVANTS.—ARMENIAN LADIES.—WORKWOMEN.—VILLAGERS.—HOUSE AND GARDENS.—ARMENIAN COOKING.—VILLAGE OF BEBEC.—FRUIT AND FOOD.—HIGH PRICES.—PERA.—STATE OF CRIME.

Orta-kioy, November 24th, 1855.

My dear Mother,

I MUST now tell you about our second day here. Edmund rode early into Pera, promising to inquire as to the fate of our missing goods and chattels; and after he was gone, I tried to inspire Calliope with a wish to make our really pretty little house look a degree less wretched. Fortunately she speaks Italian indifferently well.

After finishing unpacking, I went into the dining-room, to look for something left there the night before. Neglected and dusty, in a corner, stood a dingy grand-pianoforte, bought in the old Armenian lady's prosperous days, as she afterwards told me. I opened it, and found with great delight that it was not yet quite tuneless. I had sung about half my

cantata, when, from the perfect silence and emptiness of the house, it seemed as if I had exorcised a host of strange beings; for, flourishing a pair of huge iron pincers in one hand and some strange-looking instrument in the other, with the wildest and most discordant gruntings and gestures you can conceive, in rushed Simione, one of the dumb and elfish-looking Armenians. What he wanted of course I could not at all imagine,—whether he asked leave to cut off my head (I was certainly not like a white cat), or to pull out all my teeth. However, I thought it best to seem agreeable, and out of the room my visitor rushed, nodding violently, and grunting as perseveringly as usual. Presently he returned with a Turk, carrying a basket of tools, who saluted me, and spoke some very magnificent, but to me perfectly unintelligible, sentences in Turkish.

Was ever poor creature so perplexed as I! Calloipe had entirely disappeared. Well, upstairs these worthies went, I thinking it as well to follow. Off they threw all the things on my poor camp-bed. It was merely to make a little piece of ironwork secure, which had been broken the night before, in putting up. This was a great relief to my feelings, and I could not help laughing at the absurd position in which ignorance of a language places one.

While the Armenian was grunting in his strange

way and making signs to the Turk, who was getting angry at my not taking *his* side of the question on being appealed to, in walked again the Armenian lady and her daughter. They had with them a villainous-looking Jew, in a large turban and tattered Eastern garments, about whom they began making extraordinary signs and grimaces.

I shall certainly go distracted here, thought I. At last I comprehended that this gentleman offered his services to clean our windows, and, holding up my fingers, I made out the number of piastres he *asked*, and, from the old lady, how many to *give*, which was quite a different thing. He cleaned two panes but imperfectly, and then slipped away without asking for anything. I suppose he was vexed at not obtaining double the proper price. I was almost out of patience with the Armenian ladies, who again seated themselves on the divan, and again seemed to find the greatest satisfaction in looking at me. I made signs that I would search for Calliope to interpret, and crossed the little garden into the kitchen.

There was an old Armenian woman of the village, who had taken up her quarters until the cook should arrive. She was dressed in very picturesque rags, and had thick plaits of hair bound round her fez. I was rash enough to attempt showing her by signs how the "Inglesi" liked chops cut, etc. All I got

for my pains was a patronizing smile, and “Bono Johnny,—bono!” with a fat hand stroking down my back as if I had been her cat. I could not stand this; and, after inquiring for Calliope, and getting for answer a shake of the head, decamped with the utmost precipitation.

Presently the young lady returned, and informed me that feeling it dull (*trop poco tristo*), she had been to pay a visit to Mrs. Barker’s maid, Espina, who was delighted to see her; then entering into a lively conversation with the Armenian ladies, she took them into my room and showed them my English dresses, dressing-case, etc. At last, to my great relief, they departed, with many salaams; and I am happy to say, that it is as Miss Barker assured me it would be —“that when they had thoroughly stared at me, and seen all the English things, even to the reels of cotton, which I possessed, their curiosity would subside, and my torments be over.” So I took courage again, and began to hope that in time I might get a little peace.

These last two days have made a difference in the appearance of our little kiosk. Three hamals came toiling up the hill the other morning, and to my great satisfaction battered at the ponderous knocker of our garden-door. They had at last brought up a caique-load of furniture from Pera. Nobody thinks of ask-

ing why things are delayed here, so we took them in, and were thankful. Our salaamlik really looks very pretty.

Edmund bought me a piece of chintz and plenty of white muslin, at the bazaar at Stamboul, and I at last shamed Calliope by setting resolutely at work to cover the divans and hem the curtains. The village women here seem to be perfectly uneducated, and there was no such thing as a workwoman at Orta-kioy. Perhaps, after waiting for weeks, we might have secured the services of a French upholsterer from Pera, at a great expense; but you at once see that the only plan is to help yourself in every way as much as possible, unless you have a complete staff of your own, which all large families, whether Turkish, Greek, Armenian, or European, have. It is difficult to get good servants here. The *educated* ones are very clever, and ask high wages, especially during the war. The mass, as I have said, are perfectly ignorant, and almost useless to civilized people. However, their lives and ways are so utterly different from ours, that it always seems rather absurd to me to hear the English complain of them. Give them their pilauf, their old divan, a little sunshine under a ragged vine in summer, and a brass pan full of charcoal in winter, and *voilà tout*. All articles of clothing are bought ready-made, and made by men, in the bazaars; the

national shirt, of Broussa gauze, admits of and requires but little washing; consequently workwomen and washerwomen are not indigenous to the soil, although no doubt the increasing taste for dressing in the European fashion, among the higher class of Greeks and Armenians, will soon make them so. The people of the villages seem very hopeless and helpless, and care to do nothing. Certainly their wants are but few, but how they live, is a marvel, for you see them silently sitting in a mouldy shop, in which there is nothing to sell.

As I told you, the lower part of this village has been burnt down, and many of the people are still living, with their children, alternately scorched by the sun and drenched by wind and rain, in wretched tents among the ruins, where they may remain for months, and years, or until they are all carried off by some epidemic, for nobody cares for them here. Across these mouldering ruins, where the dogs howl most horribly at night, and melancholy-looking Jews and Armenians stalk by day, we have a lovely peep of the Bosphorus, its shores fringed with palaces.

The two beautiful white minarets of the Sultan's mosque are illuminated tonight, and look very pretty, wreathed with lamps round the little balustrade, on which the Muezzins appear three times a day to call the Faithful to prayer. They shine on beauty and

splendour enough on one side, and on poverty, dirt, and ruin on the other. This place certainly makes one's heart ache.

Simione, the dumb Armenian, has been very busy in the garden today, moving his orange and lemon trees, tree-geraniums, jasmines, and acacias, into the little conservatory for the winter. I am delighted to say that he has allowed me to choose as many as I please to be considered mine; so I have lined the salaamlik, and the little room beyond (which has a charming view of Scutari), with trees, six or seven feet high, and bearing both fruit and flowers. Our floors are covered with matting from Alexandria, and here and there a Turkish rug or two is thrown down by the divan. My muslin curtains and blinds shut out as much as possible of the ruins, and only let in, by some of our numerous windows, the opposite hills of Asia, and the blue water, and the minarets. So I wish you could see how pretty our rooms are, with embroidered cloths from Stamboul over our deal tables, the vase of beautiful Eastern flowers, and Edmund's amber-mouthed chibouques. Our stock of books is very small, and, except for an occasional chance of borrowing one, there are none to be got here, so pray send me a few, should an opportunity offer—not forgetting the Arabian Nights, and Mr. Meredith's Eastern Tales, which I hear are very charming. We

now get the ‘Spectator’ every week with our letters ; and news from England and from home, make a very happy evening. In the midst of so much that is pleasant however I must admit that we are half-starved. The cook whom we had engaged has really started off to the Crimea, where they are getting eight pounds a month, and the old Armenian woman makes us positively sick. Yesterday she mashed some lamb up in fat, and we were only able to shake out a few small pieces with a fork, just as dogs do a hot bit with their noses. She evidently thought this dish a triumph, and asked inquiringly and tenderly, “ Bono, Johnny ? ” I was sorry to be obliged to reply most decidedly and with a gesture of disgust, “ No bono.” If we were only near the bazaars, we might at least feed upon pilauf and cabeb. If Red-jacket (whose Armenian name is unpronounceable) would only let me alone, I might manage to cook something myself ; there is a beautiful frying-pan with a folding handle in our kit ; but to stand an incessant torrent of Greek while hanging over a charcoal-stove, to be called “ Bono Johnny,” and to be patted on the back, is more than my philosophy can well put up with. However, we have heard of a very good cook, who is leaving an officer at Scutari, and whom we hope to secure.

Here the men-servants go out to buy every morning. Mrs. Barker kindly allows her man to do so for

me, and he gives a written account of the number of piastres spent. Strangers are of course very easily cheated, but old inhabitants know pretty well what the price of things should be, and the buyers cannot make much by their morning's work, although it is said they almost invariably do a little. Meat is now about eight piastres the "oke," *i. e.* two pounds and a half English weight; tea, as in England; coffee, very cheap. The Turkish bread is made of leaven, and to my taste extremely nasty. It is made up into various shapes; sometimes into huge loaves, or flat, like pancakes, or in wreaths, and scattered over with a kind of caraway-seed, when it is called *seemeet*.

We have heard of an American missionary baker at the village of Bebec, near here, and some day I shall take a caique and go in search of him; especially as Bebec is one of the most picturesque villages on the Bosphorus. Vegetables and fruit are very cheap, and, even in this miserable village, the stalls in the narrow and filthy "street" are prettily laid out in a morning. Here too, in large baskets, one sees the fish of the Bosphorus in singular variety:—red mullet, sword-fish, turbot, soles, beautiful little mackerel; and the shining, many-coloured "enchanted fish," of which I have told you before, besides several others. Snails, of a light brown colour, are very much eaten here by the Greeks, and huge baskets of them

are sold every morning. Sometimes one sees an unfortunate tortoise carried along by a wisp of straw or grass. He is to be made soup of on a Greek fast-day, and has been found fast asleep in a vineyard. The melon-stalls are usually the most crowded, and immense piles of every shape and colour are quickly sold. Brown bread, melons, and grapes, seem to be the principal food of the poor; coffee, yahoort (a kind of sour milk), lemonade, and sherbet, are sold in every corner of the street for them. The buying everything prepared in public, no doubt makes the Eastern women so helpless, and so little domestic. One sees even the caiquejees and hamals eating their pilauf, and sipping their coffee at the cafanées, or smoking on comfortable divans inside, or on benches by the door. In fact, it is quite "club life" for the men, and a neglected, idle, and useless one for the poor women,—at least, according to our notions. But I must say adieu, for my fingers are very cold and stiff, and there is no such thing as a fireplace in the house. Calliope brought me a pan of charcoal just now, but it made my head ache, and I was obliged to send it away. Here the natives luxuriate round a *mangale*, *i. e.* a square table with a rail round the bottom, on which to place the feet: under the table is placed a pan of charcoal, and spread over all, a thick Turkish quilt. Those accustomed to the fumes of

charcoal think a *mangale* very pleasant. I sat by one the other day, and soon felt very ill indeed.

The moment a storm comes on here now, it is winter at once. Last week the weather was sultry, and a slight shock of earthquake was felt at Broussa, Pera, and even Therapia. The wind changed suddenly to the north; and I now look despairingly at our little stove, which lies in the room before me, without much hope of ever getting it put up. We bought a large caique-load of wood yesterday: it is frightfully dear since the war. Nothing seems to be *restored* here; everybody cuts, and nobody plants, about Constantinople, which makes the hills so bare of anything but cypress, except in the gardens of the Pasha. Great quantities of wood are brought down from the shores of the Black Sea, in those ancient-looking Greek feluccas which I told you of. All our acquaintances here tell us that we shall never be able to stand the sharp winter winds in a kiosk with thin wooden walls; but that remains to be seen. Anything to me would be better than being shut up in the crowds, dirt, and noise of Pera. Besides which the rent of the filthiest houses is something enormous. All the cavalry are coming down; an "Opera" is opened, and they say it will be very gay. We do not hear much about the war now: nothing more is to be done until next year. Those in the Crimea are

preparing to pass the winter as comfortably and as warmly as they can, and the sick and wounded are being sent home as expeditiously as possible. We saw the Duke of Newcastle the other day at Lord Stratford's; he is very earnestly collecting all possible information about the war and its conduct.

Pera is in a dreadful state of confusion. Ruffians and outcasts of all kinds have increased a hundred-fold since the war began. There are no police or guards of any kind, and murders and all sorts of outrages are perpetrated in the crowded streets even by day, and, still more, in the utter darkness and confusion of the nights. You will see in the papers, no doubt, an account of a fight which took place a day or two ago between some French and Tunisian soldiers, in which one or two were killed and several wounded. The French instantly marched two regiments into Stamboul, without waiting to ask leave of the Turkish Government. Every one thinks them in the right; if the Turks will not prevent murder, the Allies must. Soldiers, missed from their barracks at night, are constantly found stabbed in the morning, in the cemeteries and other places where they have been surprised and waylaid. Another French officer was stabbed on the Bridge of Boats yesterday, and it is feared that his wound will prove mortal. An English clergyman, walking quietly

along, was also wounded in the arm, but it appears that, happily, the dagger missed its aim.

These crimes of revenge, it is said, are perpetrated by the Sciote Greeks, who, since the massacre of Scio, of course entertain great feelings of hatred and animosity towards the Turks, and are indignant at the Allies for helping them in their present struggle with the Russians. The band of Greek "sailors" who have committed so many enormities, still roam at large, and scarcely a day passes without a new outrage being heard of. Yesterday morning the shop of a poor Turk at Galata was observed to be shut up after the usual hour ; it had been ransacked in the night, and its master cruelly murdered. Mr. Grace, a merchant here, was going to dine at Mysseri's with some friends an evening or two ago ; at about seven he entered his counting-house, where he had made arrangements to dress, his country-house being at a distance. The place had only been left by his people an hour before, yet, in broad daylight, he found everything gone that could be easily carried off, without the slightest alarm having been made, or the slightest possible clue given.

Many of the members of this formidable band of Greeks speak, I am told, English and French perfectly well. No effort is made to capture them ; indeed it is well known that the Turkish (so-called) guards, wher-

ever they may be, are so miserably paid and so completely demoralized, that each thief shares with them a certain amount of his plunder, consequently the last thing the robbers think of is being taken by the “authorities.”

I always hear the clatter of my husband’s horse’s hoofs on his return of an evening, with a sensation of relief, especially knowing how highly incensed several Turkish dignitaries are with both himself and his colleague for their endeavours to prevent the Loan from falling into their hands.

Last night the Muezzins had long called to evening prayer before his return, and I began to feel rather nervous and lonely, watching the lengthening shadows, and then the lights in the valley, and listening to unfamiliar Greek, as Calliope sat whispering with the Armenian woman by the garden-door.

## LETTER XVI.

WINTER ON THE BOSPHORUS.—OUR ARMENIAN NEIGHBOURS.—  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.—TURKISH REGULATION OF TIME.—  
THE WINTER THEATRE IN THE CRIMEA.—ZOUAVE MODISTES.

Orta-kioy, November 28th, 1855.

My dear Mr. Hornby,

Now that our household arrangements are completed,—and we are as well settled for the winter as is possible in this barbarous country,—I shall find more time to write you letters, which you will read by your comfortable fireside in England.

After the beauty of scenery, and pleasantness of out-door life here in summer-time is over, the approach of winter scares one; just as it would a merry picnic party, all clad in spring garments, on our hills, could it peep in unexpectedly on them. Certain it is, that we never truly value what we have until it is lost to us. In a comfortable house, in a pretty drawing-room in England, one sometimes feels dull, wearied with everyday life, and longing for more

stirring incident; but when the novelty of a strange Eastern country is once over,—when your head is tired, and your heart wants something to dwell on with pleasure,—when your feet are cold and the tips of your fingers blue, because you cannot choose between being made sick with a pan of charcoal, or being half-suffocated by a badly-contrived stove,—when you cannot move in the streets for rivers of filth, and the beautiful Bosphorus is too rough to venture out on it in your egg-shell caique,—when you can't make up your mind to have every bone shaken out of its proper place in a teleki (which jolteth and crasheth cruelly and remorselessly along at the rate of two miles an hour),—when you cast a glance at your three books on the table, read three times over, and feel with despair that there is no probability of getting others for many a long day,—when there blows a north wind from the Black Sea, driving wrecks down before your windows, and flakes of snow through the thin wooden boards of your kiosk,—when the pilauf is waiting and nobody returns to dinner, and you think of nightly murders and robberies in the dark streets of Pera,—*then* you look back with a perfect rapture of regret on blazing fire-places, safe roads, and lighted streets, protected at least from robbers. When you recollect that every sound we hear is strange, every custom we note different,—when

we are charmed to find that even a foreign tongue like Italian is, though imperfectly, understood;—when you remember that the Turks look upon our religion and manners with the greatest repugnance,—you will not be surprised at the delight with which we receive letters, or the slightest token of a home, which shines to us out here like a distant Paradise.

Seeing the frightful political and social state of Eastern countries must make the coldest person in the world feel patriotic, and grateful too, for the comforts and the safety which we so carelessly enjoy in England. The human race has certainly a great aptitude for taking all good as a matter of course. The old Armenian lady next-door often pays me a visit, and I fancy that our stay here quite cheers her dull and melancholy life. A widow in this country is pretty certain to be stripped of almost everything, and this poor lady has a sad story to tell of houses and money taken from herself and children by the Turks under various pretences. One of her dumb sons was sent to Italy in the days of their prosperity. He is exceedingly intelligent, writes Italian fluently, and with his assistance and interpretation my conversations with his mother and sisters are carried on.

I often wish you were present at these visits, which are really very amusing. The old lady, who is even

now charming, and who must have been of the most regular and serene order of Armenian beauty, comes softly into my little drawing-room, two of her daughters following, and "Antonio" in the rear, pencil in hand, as interpreter. I rise, and we all bow, touching our lips and foreheads, with our fingers, after the manner of Eastern salutation. Then I motion them to take a seat on the divan, which the mother does, wrapping her large fur jacket around her, as she reclines in a comfortable corner. The young girls will not presume to sit with us, but timidly place themselves on the edges of stiff, uncomfortable American chairs. Antonio, after many persuasive signs, consents to take my camp-stool at a respectful distance; and I, from my little table, hand him a slip of paper, on which is written, in Italian, that I am very happy to see them, etc. etc. Antonio reads, bows, and then in dumb-show translates this with the utmost rapidity to his mother, who as rapidly replies to him. In another second I am told, in cramped and curious characters, that they all salute me, and thank me, and hope that I am happy and contented, etc. After this we gradually fall into more general conversation, and then the two pencils work away fast and furious. A large sheet of paper with the questions and answers is quite a curious document,—questions about England, and London particularly,

seeming without end. However, almost everything is difficult for them to believe in ; and yet I see that they trust me very much. Our excellent government,—our schools and hospitals,—our roads and paved and lighted streets,—our shops where the *real* price is asked, and you are not obliged to spend the whole day bargaining for a shawl or gown,—our just “*Cadis*” (magistrates), who would *really* refuse five pounds as a bribe from a notorious ruffian to let him off, or two pounds for obligingly torturing an innocent person,—are things almost above their comprehension.

However, I must say that my account of cabs at sixpence a mile was the *bouquet* (as they call the last and finest firework) of wonders which I showered upon them about England. Wonderingly the dark-eyed girl Dhudu looks at her mother, who raises her hands in her quiet and subdued astonishment. Oscu stops trilling her colomboyo and signs to her brother, who writes for her : “ If I were in your England, I might be well once more.” Poor Oscu, I am afraid, is in a decline. I never beheld any human being so pale, and there is something peculiarly interesting about her. Her features are perfectly regular, her eyes large, soft, and deeply fringed with the blackest lashes, her head small and beautifully shaped ; and her hair hanging down her shoulders in the marvel-

lously long and thick plaits which one occasionally sees in this part of the world. She has been ill for three or four years. The Armenian doctor cannot find out what her complaint is, but, to ease his conscience by trying something, he frequently bleeds the poor pale thing in the foot.

Winter has regularly set in here. The rain is pouring down in torrents, and a rapid stream rushes from the hills through the middle of the steep road by the side of our house. When he cannot ride, Edmund, in high boots and waterproof poncho, gets down to the Pera steamer, which stops at the little wooden pier of the village, about nine in the morning. But as the Turks reckon time, and set their clocks and watches by the sun, of course the time of its arrival is always varying more or less, and, if not careful in your calculations from morning to morning, you either have to wait, or have the pleasure of seeing the dripping standard of the Crescent and Cross rapidly disappearing towards Stamboul.

We hear occasionally from the Crimea, and are excessively diverted by stories and scenes in camp life from some homeward-bound or "on leave" acquaintance. The military theatre there has been a source of great amusement, although the heroine was sometimes obliged to hurry the last scene a little in order to take her place in the trenches, and occa-

sionally showed symptoms of nervousness in her attempts to keep her beard out of sight. I am told that the Zouaves were very expert at making up petticoats, caps, and other feminine garments, out of the most "novel materials." Of course a sailor danced a horn-pipe between the acts, and of course a sailor sang 'Wapping Old Stairs' with great applause, the Duke of Newcastle and many noted personages being present. The enemy's shells were rather troublesome in the early days of these performances, but altogether the "Royal Theatre" was a most successful affair, and is still talked of with delight. I believe that another is proposed for this winter, but I shall hear all Crimean news when Mr. Evelyn returns, which we hope will be soon, for he is not yet strong enough to brave such severe weather "up in the front."

## LETTER XVII.

DEATH OF MRS. WILLOUGHBY MOORE.—FUNERAL OF A FRENCH SOLDIER.—OUR TURKISH “ALLIES.”—TURKISH VENALITY.—PASHAS.—THEIR LUXURY AND DISHONESTY.—THE CADÍ.—TURKISH CHARACTER.

Orta-kioy, December 3rd, 1855.

My dear Mr. Hornby,

OUR kind friend Mr. Moore, “Queen’s F.S. Messenger” of this last mail, left us yesterday. Among other important despatches, he is the bearer of a diminutive one from me, which he most kindly promised to deliver himself, as soon after his arrival in Town as possible; so expect a visit from a most agreeable, gentlemanly man, who will give you plenty of news relating to the great events going on in this part of the world, and also a highly satisfactory and interesting account of ourselves. However, you may have seen him before this letter reaches England.

We saw Herbert Siborne yesterday, quite recovered, I am glad to tell you, from his late severe attack of fever. His men and horses had very un-

comfortable quarters assigned them on their first arriving at Scutari ; and fever was the consequence of his over-exertion and constant exposure to the sun. If he remains at Scutari we hope he will be able to spend Christmas-day with us, as he did at Weybridge last year. Little did we imagine then that we should meet together here in the course of a few months ! We can plainly see Scutari from our windows. You will be sorry to hear that poor Mrs. Willoughby Moore died there of dysentery last week, of course most deeply regretted by those whose sufferings she has relieved, and for whom she thought and laboured night and day. Kind Lady Stratford was with her to the last, doing all she could. Day after day, in the stormiest weather, we have seen the Ambassador's caïque beating its way over to the hospital at Scutari, as it did also, I am told, before Mrs. Moore went there, and when Lady Stratford was anxious that the sick and wounded soldiers should be better cared for. Poor Mrs. Moore was a woman of many sorrows : her husband, Colonel Moore, perished in a burning ship rather than leave his men ; she had lost her only child, and was left quite alone in the world, and then felt that the only thing which could make her endure life cheerfully was to lessen the miseries of others. She said to a friend of mine, just before she was taken ill, that had she been told sometime ago that she

could ever have felt as happy as she was at the hospital at Scutari, she could not have believed it. Her sufferings during her illness were very severe, but borne with the greatest fortitude and resignation. Many a poor fellow whom she had nursed and comforted, followed her to the grave. It was quite a day of mourning at Scutari.

Talking of funerals, Edmund stopped to take off his cap the other day, and to stand for a few minutes as the only mourner, by the grave of a poor French soldier, who was being buried at a roadside cemetery near Pera, no one attending but a priest, who hurried off after a short prayer, leaving the two Greek bearers to fling the poor fellow into strange earth, far from his country and friends. One sees many sad sights here, as well as novel ones, and it is very dispiriting to discover what a people these really are, after all they have cost us. As to gratitude, they detest us all the more for the humiliation of obligation. It is all very fine to talk of "alliance" in the newspapers or at public dinners, champagne in hand, and with the Crescent and Cross twining affectionately round the English Standard and the Lilies of France. Depend upon it that only from the most dire necessity will they ever tolerate our interference, and that East and West are not so far divided, as are our tastes, habits, and every natural tendency. How-

ever, there is a great deal of wisdom and refinement, after all, in their quiet lives, and there is no reason in the world why we should wish them to imitate us except in our *morale*. A Pasha dreams away life very pleasantly in his white marble palace, and shady gardens, and gently gliding caique. These are better than dinner-parties and balls, which some people call "civilization."

It is the means of getting these things—the worse than brigand way of going about it—which is so frightful here; indeed, it is difficult to express the painful impression made on the mind in this beautiful country on seeing its wretched state, and the open infamy of its rulers. It is notorious that most of the provincial judges live on the banks of the Bosphorus, expending in every luxury their monthly salaries of so many thousand piastres. They sell or let their places to the highest bidder,—often to some ignorant clerk or assistant in their own office, who may have saved a little money, and who extorts a living, by extra imposts or taxes on the unhappy people over whom he places himself as a tyrant, not to be dislodged until he can return, heavily laden with spoil, to Stamboul. A gentleman who has resided for many years in different parts of Asia Minor, and who takes the greatest interest in the fine and oppressed people of the country, tells me that he has

known these men enter a village without a few piastres to pay for the hire of their two or three baggage-mules, and at the end of three or four years, leave it for a palace at Constantinople.

A short time ago a Pasha here murdered his wife under circumstances of the greatest atrocity. As she happened to be a Pasha's daughter, he was, singular to say, tried for the crime, and sentenced to the bagnio, or prison, and was actually sent there. However, a sentence of punishment to a Pasha who is rich is but a matter of form, and the individual to whom I allude is now generally supposed to be enjoying himself in one or other of the Greek islands.

It is seldom now that a Pasha of any rank loses his head, except it be through the successful intrigue of some reigning favourite ; and then he is only murdered in his turn, with the same duplicity which he has practised before, in getting rid of his equals in power. No Pasha is ever punished for murdering or robbing those in his power : that is considered as a matter of course. But the criminal I have mentioned, having murdered his wife instead of one of his slaves, was nominally sentenced to the bagnio, but really sent to "rule" and "govern" in the Greek island to which I have alluded,—a fashionable way here of re-proving Pashas who are not careful to manage their little affairs with more secrecy and address..

Mehemet Ali, the Capitan Pasha, was originally a shop-boy at one of the bazaars; and many of the most "famous" Pashas, from time immemorial, have risen from the same low station, or have been bought in the slave-market. Pleasing their masters, has advanced them step by step. Bearing false-witness with unblushing effrontery in some case of unjust seizure or frightful oppression, or in some daring intrigue on the part of their master to supplant a favourite, is a sure and certain road to favour and preferment. What we call education, talent, genius, is not marketable stuff here. Fanaticism, false-witness, calm cruelty, and above all, consummate falsehood and deceit, under a smiling, bland exterior, are the things requisite to make a Turkish favourite; these essentials to success are leading traits in the Eastern character. I heard a gentleman say, the other evening, that he really believed there were two honest men in Constantinople, *i. e.* Kihisli Pasha, the Seraskier, or Minister of War, and Halill Pasha. Yet it is said that Halill Pasha made two millions of money during his ministry, which was not a long one.

It is scarcely difficult, when you see more closely into the state of things here, to account for the disgraceful lives of the Pashas and Ministers, more particularly of those who have risen from the lowest ranks of the people. Just fancy a man once a shoe-

maker, afterwards a police-officer, made an admiral because he was a favourite: and this was the case with the late Achmet Papudgi, who, at the height of his power, could neither read nor write.

What is to be expected of men who have been brought up in poverty, oppression, and ignorance, with every bad example before their eyes in the rich man close to their own miserable hovels? While poor and oppressed, he is honest, because he has neither power to steal nor to do harm; but the moment the slightest temptation presents itself to lift him out of his misery, all these negative, so-called "good qualities" of the Turk vanish into thin air. The Cadi, or the Pasha who had noticed him, wants perhaps a false witness or two to rob a poor widow or orphans of all that is left them, or to strip a farmer or merchant of his entire possessions. The hitherto "honest" (because poor) Turk think she may just as well relieve his wretched poverty by a thing so common as perjury, as starve on, with a very good chance besides of being bastinadoed to death on a false charge, falsely maintained too, for having refused the "honourable" commands of his Pasha. Once get a post here however, by favouritism and an "obliging disposition," and the road to luxury, the Turk's only ambition, is fast and easy enough. The Minister of Police, for instance, receives a large sum for subor-

dinates. These he pays so miserably, scarcely giving them enough to sustain life, that they are well known to receive so many piastres a day from each thief; so that nothing is ever further from their thoughts than to dislodge any criminals. Of course there are a few exceptions, but the chief occupants of the prisons here are either innocent persons, who have been stripped of all they possess, or those who have fallen under the displeasure of some Pasha or other.

You ask, "How is the justice of this country administered?" My dear Mr. Hornby, I believe from all the questions which I have asked of those who know Turkey well, who have lived in it for years, and who are honourable and truthful men, that I am not in the slightest degree leading you towards an exaggerated idea of the miseries of this unhappy country, when I reply simply, that there is none. Bribery and false testimony reign here supreme. The luxury of the Pashas, the summer palaces (which contrast with the hovels in which they toiled for daily brown-bread but a few years before), the caparisoned and jewelled horses, the numerous slaves and ruffian retainers are supported by imposts and depredations of all kinds. The middle class of people have almost entirely disappeared. The "Government" have pretty well succeeded in killing the goose for its golden eggs; there will soon be nothing left to plunder. I

am assured by a merchant here that twenty years ago there were many beautiful home manufactures, constantly worn by the people, which have now quite disappeared. When a Pasha found a manufactory in his district, which was flourishing, he so taxed and robbed the unhappy proprietor, who was already subject to heavy Government imposts, that he was soon obliged to fly with his family, or to starve in the ruins. Or else a false charge was brought against him, and he died of the bastinado in prison, while the Pasha seized his house and goods for a fine, impossible for him to pay. So most of the lucrative manufactures have been lost to the country, and the Government, being prevented by treaties with foreign Powers from increasing to any great extent the duties on foreign productions, have burdened home manufactures and produce with very heavy duties, thus effectually putting a finishing stroke to native enterprise or industry.

Other and happier countries are thus able to send their goods in so much cheaper, that there is but little commerce here of any real advantage to the body of the people. In fact their condition, and that of the Pashas, is perfectly illustrated by the beautiful white marble palace and a more wretched hovel than Ireland ever produced. However, one can hardly be sorry to see that the country is so drained that there

is but little left to steal ; and, come what may, the poor cannot be worse off.

I must not forget to tell you that the Cadi, or magistrate, of every village fixes the price of provisions. He is himself paid, and upon being told his annual stipend, you ask how he lives. The butcher, baker, etc., pay him so many piastres a week to keep the price of meat and bread above what it should be. A man who ought to be bastinadoed, is glad to give his ten, twenty, or thirty piastres, according to his means, to be let off; and a man falsely accused is equally delighted to make his little present and be let off with a whole skin too. If a man is punished here, you may be pretty well sure that he has not been able to give enough to his Cadi. Can you imagine any state of things more dreadful than all this?

Most of the Turks are fine open-countenanced-looking fellows. Even when a tradesman tries to get out of you more than double the price of the article in question, your pity for him overcomes any other feeling. He is obliged to get what he can, under the great pressure constantly bearing him down and threatening starvation.

Sometimes he has been fortunate enough to get a little money hidden away, to help him in his business in some particular way : well, a Minister of Finance, to rake up a few thousands to build a summer palace,

or to buy Georgian slaves and led horses, absolutely alters the value of the paper money or of the poor coins saved up, and so the people lose largely on frequent occasions.

People who have worn out their sympathies upon Hottentots and South-Sea Islanders, and need the excitement of Exeter Hall to keep their benevolence up to the mark,—those who must have a foreign country and people to help,—had better come here; for here are horrors and difficulties enough.

The barbarities of mere savages do not impress one at all in comparison with the profound melancholy which one feels in this magnificent grave of truth and freedom, where Soul looks sorrowfully and dejectedly out of the fine dark eyes of the people, who have nothing to hope for in their wretchedness, but to become as guilty as the men whom they hated and despised in the honest days of their misery and labour. Many, who know them well, believe that they deeply feel the degradation of their country, and would like to rise up among nations if they could. Alas! the poor working-man who says so, believes at the same time that it is hopeless, and when his turn for temptation comes, falls with the rest, or else ends his life in the misery in which it began. Fancy a well-inclined baker or carpenter at home resisting a crime which he sees every day may lead to fortune, and

sees every day committed by those above him, as a matter of course. Fancy a man in office being able to refuse a bribe, or to avoid taking what the others take in the next palace. He remembers what he suffered in the days of his poverty, and grasps what he can while the sun shines, which, politically speaking, is uncertain enough here.

Some of the Pashas are of old date of course, many professing to be descended from the Dere-Beys, or "Lords of the Valley;" but they are, generally speaking, men of a day, and risen from the lowest class, as I have told you. It is time indeed that the civilized world should know the state of its unhappy neighbour, so well described by the Emperor Nicholas.

I heard a gentleman say the other day, "The English Government (although of course it knows much) has no adequate idea of the disgraceful state of this country and its Ministry; or of the extraordinary difficulty which one meets with in doing anything with the Turks." The fact is that English and French delicacy shrinks from openly saying to a Turkish Minister, "I know you are cheating." Not understanding the delicacy however, the Turks think that you either do not see through their knavery, or are finessing with them after their own fashion.

Our kiosk is halfway up the hill in Orta-kioy;

looking down upon the miserable village in the valley, and just catching a glimpse of glittering palaces on the edge of the Bosphorus. The sun has burst out this morning after the rain, and over such a country ! Stranger as I am, my heart could but bound, as many others have done, on looking over the loveliest hills and valleys that fancy ever dreamed of,—so beautiful still, in spite of all the evil works of man ! trees felled never to be replanted,—vineyards rooted up never to clothe the hillside again,—thousands and thousands of acres lying uncultivated, where ought to be waving corn. Superstitious veneration for the dead only plants cypresses, to break with their rich clumps the otherwise monotonous ranges of hills on either side the Bosphorus. The cypress-gardens cannot be robbed ; fruit-trees and orchards soon would be ! Here Byron's poetry is *truth*, splendidly and forcibly told.

“ His ill-got treasure soon replaced :  
Would question whence ? Survey the waste,  
And ask the squalid peasant how  
His gains repay his broiling brow ! ”

One thing surprises me very much, and that is, the exaggeration pervading most of the books I have seen about Turkey. To read them, you would think that the Turks were idle, but happy,—poor, but contented. How different is the real state of things ! I cannot help wishing that Admiral Slade's book,

which I once mentioned to you, were as well known as some volumes of pretty-sounding unreality. It seems to me a positive sin to give to the civilized world so false a notion of the social and political state of a people, whose only hope now rests, though unconsciously to themselves, upon the genius, patience, and philanthropy of happier nations being exerted in their favour.

I thought the other day, when standing under the plane-trees where tradition says Godfrey de Bouillon once encamped, that a nobler crusade may be fought here by earnest wish and good example of Christian nations now admitted, than ever was fought before against infidels in the olden time by lance and spear. As far as I have yet seen however, there is but little of this spirit afloat among the French and English. After they have once amused themselves by laughing at the peculiarities and the miseries of the Turks, they are very well inclined either to let them alone, or, with mischievous and unprincipled levity, to tempt them to drink wine, or commit some act of English folly, which cannot give them a very exalted idea of either our kindness or morality.

## LETTER XVIII.

OUR GREEK COOK.—CALLIOPE'S DESPONDENCY.—TROUBLES IN THE KITCHEN.—APPROACH OF WINTER.—THE SULTAN'S VISIT TO THE MOSQUE.—A MALTESE DOG.

Orta-kioy, December 30th, 1855.

My dear Mother,

OUR Greek cook has arrived from Scutari, and we already feel like mice in harvest-time, after our lengthened starvation. I was busy in the garden when he came. He is very like our old picture of ‘the Banished Lord,’ and lifted his cap with a lofty magnificence of manner, which I humbly admitted to myself was infinitely more dignified than the look of supreme satisfaction of which I felt conscious. He is very tall and very pale, with a long black beard and heavy projecting brows. He looks famished and misanthropic, is evidently silent and sarcastic; and Calliope is broken-hearted. She has been so dull here, so disappointed at not finding us in the very heart of Stamboul, or of Pera at least (which the Smyrniotes consider a paradise of flirtation and gaiety),

so hopeless of a mistress who does not appreciate sitting dressed out at a window, like the Smyrniote ladies, and has no notes or bouquets going backwards and forwards,—no, not even one,—and who writes and reads or strolls in the garden all the day long, that she had looked forward to the arrival of the cook with great joy. And now to find him married, misanthropic and surly, dressed in an English coat with sleeves too short for his long thin arms, no gay embroidery, not even a sash,—the poor Greek maiden's ill-fortune can no further go. It is Carnival-time too, the streets of Pera are gay with noisy and wandering crowds, and Calliope's suffering and *tristezza* are almost more than she can bear. She sighs dismally at this last blow, and wipes her immense black eyes with a bright-yellow handkerchief after handing my coffee. “Vassili” treats her with haughty distance, and desires her to show him the way to the kitchen, whence he instantly dislodges the Armenian woman with profound expressions of contempt, and sets about arranging the charcoal in the stoves with the air of a master of his art, but looking much more like a conspirator, or a brigand under difficulties, than the domestic being which we are accustomed to consider a cook. His arrival is certainly a great event in our domestic life here. He promised the “Signor” should have a well-dressed

dinner, and kept his word admirably, the only drawback being Calliope's sighs and tearful looks, as she attended in a most languishing and desponding manner. But, seriously speaking, this is very annoying, especially to me when alone, and I entreated her yesterday to return to Smyrna, or to look out for another situation here, as I could not undertake the task of keeping up her spirits or provide her with amusement. As the weather becomes more wintry, it is what she calls duller still ; the Bosphorus is very rough and the streets very dirty. When we sat down to breakfast this morning, a distant mountain on the Asiatic side was glittering with snow ; the effect of the sunbeams on it was very beautiful, and I wished myself there with a long and free walk before me.

It is Friday, and I have been down to the mosque to see the Sultan go to midday prayer. He came from his palace at Tcheran ; English, French, and Turkish ships-of-war saluting him with a perfect roar of cannon as his beautiful gilded caiques floated by. The guard surrounded the mosque, and lined the narrow street leading to it. They marched from Tcheran, with their band playing alternately European airs and marches, and wild and barbarous Turkish tunes, in which fifes and drums predominate. I stood on the white terrace surrounding the mosque, but the crowd of guards and Pashas prevented my

getting a good view of the Sultan, who was besides pretty well hidden beneath a bright-red silk umbrella. I consoled myself by admiring his magnificently gilt and carved caiques floating gracefully on the blue water, or moored with their fine picturesque crews by the white marble steps of the mosque. Some of the men were standing up in the finest possible attitudes, others reclining on their benches. It was a most striking and beautiful picture of Eastern life. There were six or seven caiques, some with golden and velvet-lined canopies, and one or two with the effigy of a white dove, with outspread wings, fluttering on an almost invisible gilt stem in the prow, which had a charming effect, rising and falling on the waves. The Sultan remained about an hour in the mosque, his miserable-looking soldiers keeping guard around, and a few Pashas and officers of State lounging and gossiping on the terrace. I was watching for the red silk umbrella, but was again disappointed; for when the fifes and drums announced that the Sultan's prayers were over, instead of approaching the principal entrance of the mosque, the royal caiques were turned towards the Palace; and I was told that the Sultan had dismissed his suite, had slipped quietly out of a private door, and, with two or three attendants, had gone to pay a visit to his favourite sister, the wife of Mehemet Ali, at Arnaut-

koi. So we strolled homewards through a crowd of soldiers mustering for their return to the Palace, and the usual motley groups of villagers, caiquejees, and fishermen, beggars, sherbet-sellers, and street dogs.

In our garden we found an Armenian of the village awaiting our return. He had a beautiful little Maltese dog to sell, which, after much bargaining, industriously interpreted by our friend Antonio, became ours for the sum of eighty piastres. It is a merry little creature, and I have named him Fuad. Edith will be delighted with his fun and frolic, his snow-white coat and bright black eyes. The poor Armenian widow Almira was solacing herself with a cigarette and an ancient friend on her doorstep. She seemed pleased at my delight with the dog, and going indoors, presently returned with a little necklace of blue beads, which she hung round his neck, and begged earnestly that I would allow him to wear it as a charm against the "evil eye;" for she would not have me grieved by his loss, Antonio earnestly wrote, in his pretty *eastern* Italian. So, with a dog, I now find our little kiosk beginning to feel something more like a home; and in the short twilight before dinner-time, the little fellow sits with me before the open door of our stove, in which the wood burns cheerily. Instead of a pan of water on the

stove, I have placed a small kettle, and its song is the sweetest music in the world to me, as I scorch first one foot and then the other in my frantic endeavours to get thoroughly warm, and my obstinate folly in persisting in a dream of an English fireside.

## LETTER XIX.

CHRISTMAS-DAY AT CONSTANTINOPLE.—BEAUTY OF THE BOSPHORUS.—CROWD OF VESSELS.—MYSSERI'S HOTEL.—TALES OF THE CRIMEA.—THE GREEK CHRISTMAS.—CHRISTMAS DINNER AT THE EMBASSY.—MISS NIGHTINGALE.—CHRISTMAS GAMES.

Orta-kioy, January 5th, 1856.

My dear Julia,

MANY thanks for your last long and pleasant letter. It is quite impossible for you to understand how thoroughly we enjoy home news, and how it reconciles us more than anything else to our banishment. As Mrs. Austin says, you certainly have the art of putting much into a small space. I am delighted to hear such good accounts of dear Reginald, and regret that I shall miss seeing him in the prime of his babyhood. Everybody tells me that he is such a lovely child ! I dare say he will walk by the time we return.

Often I look very wistfully over the Sea of Marmora on returning ships, and long for the day when we may be sailing over it again, homeward-bound. Sometimes I am very much depressed, thinking of

the distance which separates me from Edith and you all ; then I lash up my courage and become cheerful and contented and grateful again. A Mail is due today, and I *may* have letters tomorrow morning : I know you will be thinking much of us by your Christmas logs. The weather here has been most bright and lovely,—soft south winds and uninterrupted sunshine for the last ten days, difficult to understand as Christmas-time.

We went into Pera on Christmas-day, Lord and Lady Stratford kindly taking pity on our loneliness, and asking us to dinner. I wish you could have seen the Bosphorus as it was when we embarked in our caique from the little wooden pier of Ortakioy, the Sultan's white marble mosque shining in the morning sun. Numbers of Greeks and Turks were basking on the rickety woodwork, idly watching the turbaned fishermen in their gaily-painted boats pulling in nets quite silvery with multitudes of glittering fish ; so does the Bosphorus teem with every variety of finny inhabitant. Once on this lovely sea, you forget all about the miseries and calamities of Turkish towns and villages, and can only think it the most beautiful place in the world, as your caique darts along the waves, and you mark palaces and gardens and distant mountains.

The Bosphorus on Christmas-day was particularly

beautiful to us, unused now to see outward signs of a Christian people. The almost innumerable European ships were gaily dressed with flags and pennants, which fluttered in the brilliant sunshine. You may imagine the effect in the Sea of Marmora, with Prince's Islands like clouds rising from the sea, and, far in dreamy distance, the Asian mountains glittering with ice and snow. It was delightful to feel the warmth of spring in your caique, and to look upon shining avalanches above the clouds themselves.

The beauty of this place, on the sea, is so great that, even while looking on it, you do not believe that it is real. I feel this every time I row near "beautiful Stamboul," and by the Maiden's Tower, which stands built on a rock in the Sea of Marmora, where you see stately ships coming in from England and France, for this great war.

Nearer to Constantinople, Pera, and Tophana, is literally a forest of masts, and it is marvellous that more accidents do not happen than one hears of, for caiques and Maltese boats dart by hundreds in and out, under the very jaws of the leviathans, the ships at anchor on each side taking up a very deep border of the Bosphorus. Several English and French men-of-war on Christmas morning were taking in from caiques famous stocks of good things to make merry ; oranges, dried fruits, grapes, and Turkish sweetmeats,

whose name is Legion. We passed close alongside the 'Queen,' who always gives the Sultan such a hearty salute, that she almost sends his Majesty's gilded caïques flying in the air instead of skimming the water. The English soldiers and sailors often give a passing countrywoman a tremendous cheer, recognizing a bonnet immediately among the crowd of veils. I got a first-rate one, with caps waving a hearty adieu, from the crew of a transport slowly steaming down from the Crimea on her way to England. I so rejoiced with the poor fellows, after all they had gone through in this terrible war, and would have given something to have been going home too with that fine and jolly company on Christmas-day.

It is very pleasant to hear the sound of English now and then from a ship or passer-by. Being in a Turkish village, as we are, is a very different thing to being at Mysseri's Hotel at Pera, which, since the war began, has been crowded with English officers. There, one hardly seems in a strange country. Mrs. Mysseri is extremely fond of flowers, and always has some very beautiful ones on her terrace and in the deep windows of the staircase: they look so pretty and refreshing, on coming in from the hot and dusty streets. On Christmas-day all her orange and lemon trees adorned the salaamlik; the country-people had brought her in immense branches of myrtle, which

abounds here ("Know ye the land of the cypress and myrtle?"), and the place wore quite a festive air, except that there was no holly, and that told more than anything else that one was not in old England, which every one adores when away from, and grumbles at when in it.

I am quite at home at Mysseri's now, and am acquainted with several people staying there. Want of occupation is the principal complaint, and I enjoy Mrs. Mysseri's kind permission to arrange and water her flowers when we are staying there. The poor officers get terribly "bored," having no amusement of any kind but standing at the door, watching the curiously varied stream of human beings perpetually pouring through the narrow street, varied with occasional strings of donkeys, and now and then of stately stepping camels. Many have been "knocking about" since the war began, and are of course more particularly longing to see their families and friends just now. It was useless to wish them a merry Christmas; one could only hope for a happier one next year, if the war is ended. They certainly bear everything very cheerfully and well, including hardship and danger in the camp before Sebastopol, and illness, *ennui*, and a stab now and then from their gracious allies here. A young officer showed me this morning a tin case, which he said with glee contained a plum-pudding, made by

his sisters in England. He was going to keep it for the Crimea when his leave at Constantinople should have expired. He told me that hundreds of puddings had arrived, and that last year it was the same, many officers "sporting" slices of it fried, up to the time of the taking of Sebastopol. However, the Crimean ants are sad lovers of good things, and seem determined to exercise their utmost ingenuity to obtain a conqueror's share of what the fortunes of war have sent to their barren coasts. Lieutenant Coote, a brave young man and a great friend of ours, amused me very much with a description of the war which he carried on against them. They certainly troubled him even more than Russian shot and shell, for he said that, however hungry, he could never make up his mind to swallow a dozen or so at a mouthful. His mother sent him out potted meats, marmalade, and other things, which he carefully barricaded in his tent. The moment he returned again from the trenches, he ran with a bosom friend to his stores. No matter how ingeniously he had covered them up, the enemy were certain to be in possession and full regale. At last they got, for a great sum, a large earthenware jar, which was constantly kept in a tub half-full of water, and this soon became the fashionable pantry of the camp, and completely defeated the ants. Although under a deep snow, they are very snug in the Crimea just now,

having plenty of excellent provisions, plenty of clothing, and good wooden huts. The Russians still keep up firing from the north side. I saw a traveller the other day who had just returned from Sebastopol. He says that it is impossible to walk about "pleasantly," as shells are frequently thrown in. One day he stopped with a friend to have the treat of a glass of ale, an adventurous Englishman having set up a small tap in one of the deserted houses. They were just paying, when a shot dashed in at the already dilapidated window, shattered what was left of the frame to pieces, split the rickety table into fragments, broke all the glasses, and so frightened mine host, that he declared, with tears in his eyes, when the first fright was over, that he *must* give up the place, "it was so very *worritting* to be fired at like that every now and then."

I have asked Mr. Evelyn to give me an account of how they spend Christmas in the Crimea, and will send you his reply, as no doubt it will be interesting. When we could no longer see the gay flags and pennants flying from the ships on the Bosphorus, Pera gave no sign to English eyes of a holiday. There was of course the same crowd of noisy Greeks, the same strange mixture of many nations. French and English soldiers were strolling about, evidently making a melancholy attempt to enjoy themselves.

The Greek Christmas-day is on our Twelfth Night this year. Mrs. Mysseri was able to give us a comfortable room with a lovely view, and we had plenty of visitors all the morning. The heat and closeness was so great that every one seemed more or less ill and depressed; many, too, home-sick. Edmund and I congratulate ourselves on being in fresh air, every time we return from Pera to Orta-kioy; the noise and dirt of Pera are so great, and want of exercise so trying to health and spirits. But it is of no use minding mud and bustling crowds and dead rats, so Lady Poulett, who has just returned from the Crimea and who bears everything in the same brave and cheerful spirit, Captain Keppel, and I, managed to get to the great cemetery for a walk among the solemn cypress-trees and countless groups of turban-stones. Captain Keppel is just appointed to the command of a squadron of gunboats, and everybody who knows him says that this is a cheerful instance of "the right man in the right place." We looked in at Signor Preziosa's on our way home, and admired his beautiful sketches of this place, groups in the bazaars, and fine old fountains. Captain Keppel bought two veiled ladies to grace his cabin, and I took a fancy to a wild and ferocious-looking dervish.

But I must tell you about the Christmas dinner at the Embassy, for everything is so different here to

any other part of the world. My Greek maid has run away, so Lady Poulett most kindly allows her English one to dress me, which is a great relief to my mind, coming from such savage parts as I do. We go downstairs together. Two ridiculously painted and gilt sedan-chairs are in the hall, with the Turkish bearers for each. Mrs. Mysseri comes out of her room to "see us dressed," and loving flowers so much herself, has kindly made up for Lady Poulett and myself a lovely bunch of myrtle and roses, which she declares is all that is wanting to strike all beholders. Our gentlemen in waiting, dressed for the dinner-party at the palace likewise, and with Crimean orders on their breasts (don't envy us too much, young ladies,—we are the only creatures of womankind amongst hundreds of our countrymen), advance to put on our wrappings. We step into our chairs, and feel ourselves picked up as if we were linnets, by the marvellous strength of our bearers. Three Turks carrying lanterns, each containing two or three candles, escort our party. Once outside the doors of your hotel at night you begin to feel nervous. The streets are now almost deserted, except by the party going to the Embassy. The houses are closely shut up, and only gleam out in their picturesque irregularity by the fitful glare of the lamps as the Turks pick their way over the great loose stones of the

“pavement” and heaps of filth here and there. Every now and then a dark figure steals by, wrapped in a large cloak, and you feel, what is so strange to the English, that murder lurks in every dark place. Once I nearly upset my chair by suddenly trying to look out ; for Edmund had disappeared out of the light of the lanterns. He had only joined a party of officers, and they soon came up, laughing and talking. The street dogs eyed us suspiciously from their lairs in the dark corners of the streets. Some of them look like hyenas lurking about at night. A guard of Turkish soldiers was drawn up in the narrow street leading to the palace, and motley groups were assembled by the gates to see the company arrive ; Greeks, Turks, and groups of mounted officers in full dress look so well by torchlight,—very different certainly to the black coats and carriages of a London dinner-party.

The palace looked very beautiful—its spacious white stone corridors, richly and warmly carpeted, and an air of *perfectness* very striking here. Beautiful orange and lemon trees, bearing both flowers and fruit ; bright, shining myrtles, and gorgeous scarlet cacti, had a charming effect. There were a few branches of Turkish holly, which is small and stunted, but not a single berry of the cherished scarlet. Mistletoe is found on many of the old oak-trees in the Crimea, but I have never seen any here. The ladies at the

Embassy have great taste in the arrangement of flowers and shrubs, and the drawing-rooms seem so beautiful to me after our savage little kiosk, that I feel like an Esquimaux suddenly imported into Belgravia, and, seated on a low sofa canopied with orange and myrtle, delight mine eyes exceedingly. I never thought to have looked with so much interest at a blazing fire-place as I do now, not having seen one for months.

Lady Stratford was not in the drawing-room when we arrived. We found General and Mrs. Mansfield, Lady Frederick Fitzroy, Sir Houston Stewart, and several officers, naval and military. The Ambassador most cordially wished everybody a happy Christmas. His Lordship always wins my heart by asking the latest news of Edie, and he *can* talk so delightfully on light matters when he has time, which is not very often. Like poor broken-hearted Lord Raglan, he has deeply and painfully felt the attack made on him about Kars. He had a pleasant chat about Orta-kioy, its ancient name, the curious fraternity of dervishes now living there; and about a Russian Princess whom Lord Stratford had once visited in a fine old Armenian house just above our kiosk,—a kind of good fairy, of whom the Greeks of the village still speak with reverence, she being of their own Church, and very charitable. But by-and-by the drawing-room doors

are thrown open, and the ambassadress enters, smiling a kind and gracious welcome. Behind her are her daughters; by her side, a tall, fashionable, haughty beauty. I could not help thinking how beautiful she looked; but the next instant my eyes wandered from her cold unamiable face to a lady modestly standing on the other side of Lady Stratford. At first I thought she was a nun, from her black dress and close cap. She was not introduced, and yet Edmund and I looked at each other at the same moment to whisper, "It is Miss Nightingale!" Yes, it was Florence Nightingale, greatest of all now in name and honour among women. I assure you that I was glad not to be obliged to speak just then, for I felt quite dumb as I looked at her wasted figure and the short brown hair combed over her forehead like a child's, cut so, when her life was despaired of from fever but a short time ago. Her dress, as I have said, was black, made high to the throat, its only ornament being a large enamelled brooch, which looked to me like the colours of a regiment surmounted with a wreath of laurel, no doubt some grateful offering from our men. To hide the close white cap a little, she had tied a white crape handkerchief over the back of it, only allowing the border of lace to be seen; and this gave the nun-like appearance which first struck me on her entering the

room, otherwise Miss Nightingale is by no means striking in appearance. Only her plain black dress, quiet manner, and great renown, told so powerfully altogether in that assembly of brilliant dress and uniforms. She is very slight, rather above the middle height; her face is long and thin, but this may be from recent illness and great fatigue. She has a very prominent nose, slightly Roman; and small dark eyes, kind, yet penetrating; but her face does not give you at all the idea of great talent. She looks a quiet, persevering, orderly, ladylike woman. I have done my best to give you a true pen and ink portrait of this celebrated lady. I suppose there is a hum all over the world of "What is she like?"

Through the beautiful flower-vases on the table, I noticed another pale and care-worn face; but this was a gentleman. I asked my neighbour who he was, and no longer wondered at his haggard looks, when I heard that he was Dr. Sandwith, just escaped from all the horrors of starvation at Kars. I was sorry not to be able to hear what he was saying; but Sir Houston Stewart's rosy, seaman's face, merry chat, and truly Christmas "Ha, ha, ha!" made it impossible to any one near him not to smile and feel very merry too. At Christmas-time mirth is particularly infectious.

But after dinner there was great fun; for all the

midshipmen of the different men-of-war lying here were invited ; such fine, brave-looking little fellows ! My heart always warms to a middy. Lady Stratford received them most kindly as they came marching in, looking so fresh and nice in their little, old-fashioned blue coatees with gilt buttons. I think they thought it rather formidable at first, but Lord Stratford proposed a “round game” for them, and they soon became as jolly as possible, brightening up with the Christmas fun and laughter. We all played like so many children ; the Admiral, the life and spirit of every game.

Many officers now arrived, and the new ball-room, which is a very beautiful one, was thrown open. Several Christmas games were played, in which almost every one joined. The middies were wild with delight, and afforded the greatest amusement, now that they felt quite at their ease. Their feeling of the *excessive* fun of playing with the Admiral was intense. In one of the games Sir Houston ran round the wide circle, ball in hand, and crying, “Earth, air, water!” The game is, you know, that the person, into whose lap the ball is thrown, must name some object, or some animal, from the last-named element, which is sometimes difficult in a second, for the ball comes to you when you least expect it, and the words are very rapidly spoken.

"Earth!" cries the Admiral, to a merry-looking, fair-haired middy.

"An ass!" promptly replies the little fellow.

"An ass! So you mean to call me an ass, do you, Sir?" said the Admiral, pretending to frown. I really thought the little boys would have expired with laughing at the bare idea!

Miss Nightingale was still very weak, and could not join in the games, but she sat on a sofa, and looked on, laughing until the tears came into her eyes. There was afterwards a dark room, with a gigantic dish of snap-dragon, and we all looked dreadfully pale in the blue light. The red coats of the officers turned orange-colour, their stars and orders of the most unearthly hue; and each wondered at the other's spectral looks, except the middies, who showed a marvellous capacity for eating fiery plums.

I thought, as I looked round, what a curious group it was playing children, even the children having acted their part in this fearful war-struggle. Many a scar still remained on the cheek and brows of officers now scrambling for snap-dragon; the poor Doctor from Kars looked like the spirit of a famished man; Miss Nightingale's nun-like head-dress, still more quaint in that strange, blue light. I said to her, "How delighted the mothers of these

boys would be to see them now!" She replied, "Ah! the poor mothers!" How the middies enjoyed the good things and delicious sweetmeats afterwards handed round! Lady Stratford was so kind, and took immense pains that they should pass a happy Christmas evening. Edmund had charge of them all to their hotel, and we were a merry, torch-light party, scrambling through the quaint and narrow streets. It seemed so odd to see such little fellows as these going to an hotel alone in a country like this. A son of Sir Charles Wood particularly struck me, as a handsome, clever boy. Sir Houston Stewart told me that most of them had been under fire, and had behaved gallantly.

So much for our Christmas-day in 1855. Perhaps we may never have so remarkable a one again.

## LETTER XX.

NEWS FROM HOME.—GREEK SERVANTS.—CALLIOPE'S SCHEME.—  
KNEELING TO THE SAINTS.—LYING PROPENSITIES.—DOMESTIC  
LIFE.—GREEK AND TURKISH CHARACTER.

Orta-kioy, January 10th, 1856.

My dear Julia,

OUR letters of this Mail have just come in. A thousand thanks to you all. Such good news from home has made me as merry as a lark, or as one of my Bashi-bazouk canaries. Edmund had also a small box tied in triumph to his saddle. I suppose it to be that which you gave to Captain Giffard; but it seems that an officer who knew us, happened to go on board the vessel just as it arrived, and among other parcels lying about, spied one addressed to me; knowing how anxious I am for news from home, he pounced upon it without ceremony, and brought it on shore. Captain Giffard will, I fear, think it either lost or stolen. However, we hope to see him soon, with news of Weybridge. How we enjoyed 'Punch,' doubly witty and sprightly here! I tried to translate

some of the fun to a Periote young lady, but it was a most miserable failure on both sides; but Antonio, the Armenian, laughs with intense delight at the dog in cap and ruff, and all sketches of that kind. Do send us out a few numbers of the 'Illustrated London News.' I have had two copies given to me, and hardly know how to divide the pictures, they are so prized here; especially anything like a London street, or a country view of trees and cottages. The numbers of 'Little Dorrit' came all safe: truly it is a wonderful little box which you have sent, and we feel quite rich. We were delighted with Edie's sayings and doings, and above all with her little letter, with drawings of the redoubtable Cochin-China. Thank her a thousand times for the brooch. It is broken, but do not tell her that; the pieces are most carefully treasured. I sleep with all the new things from home on my little camp-table near me, that I may see them the moment I open my eyes in the morning. I am very quiet here now; much more comfortable since Calliope ran away, although her tears and her everlasting yellow pocket-handkerchief haunt me still. She was a thorough Greek, and could not help intriguing over a potato. I believe that the quiet was dreadful to her; even some one to quarrel with would have been a relief. But I must tell you all about her "flitting," and how thoroughly I was taken in. However, the

Greeks certainly tell lies with such a grace that I do not feel the least abashed at my want of penetration. It is quite different from the bold and vulgar untruth of the same class in England, it is diplomatic and artistic: as actors, I should think they would make their fortunes.

Well, Fuad and I were lounging on the divan one fine morning. We had been watching Edmund as he rode away, and an Armenian baby at the opposite lattice, and a "row" among the street dogs, and a veiled Armenian lady riding down the hill astride on a milk-white mule, with an attendant on each side of her, and our neighbour's bread going to be baked in the long wooden troughs (we are getting quite Paul Prys, Fuad and I, at our windows), and an old Turk selling sweets to the fat Muezzin of our mosque, who carries his little child in his arms, munching a green apple or a cucumber. Everything here is new to me, you know, and Fuad likes it too—dear, merry little beast!—and as there are only two of us, we can play the fool together without offending any one. So I watch all that is going on, and he looks at the wild cats prowling about our garden, tell Edie, and gets so angry that I have to pull him back by his white curls, for fear he should tumble out, in the intensity of his wrath.

Well, I am a sad rambler! Calliope came rushing

upstairs wringing her hands. I boxed Fuad's ears to make him quiet, and said in Italian, "What's the matter now?" "Oh! my mother, my poor mother is dying, and has sent for us all to say good-bye (*prendere l'ultimo addio*) ; what shall I do?" The girl was *really* pale, and trembled visibly.

"Do?" I said; "go at once, of course."

"But how can I leave *you*; how can I leave the signora?" turning to Vassili, who, looking as grim as usual, was putting wood into the stove. Vassili looked a degree crosser, and made no reply beyond a Greek shrug of the shoulders. I said, "Oh, never mind me; go directly."

So Calliope rushed to the fountain in the little hall and began sluicing her face with water, then again ran up to me, arranging her long hair-plaits, crying and uttering vehement lamentations. One of her speeches was, "Ah, my poor mother! she said when we parted, 'Adieu, my Calliope! I feel growing so weak that I do not believe we shall ever meet again.'" I said, "Don't cry any more; but eat something before you go, or you will be ill."

I asked several questions about the mother, of Calliope's sailor brother, a dark-bearded, corsair-looking young gentleman, who was waiting in the garden. I remember now that he looked at Calliope for answers as to the old lady's age and ailments. I comforted

them both, and gave them some wine, and waved my hand in answer to Calliope's frequent and anxious lookings back at my window, and felt so sorry for the grief which they had to go through, and sat musing a long time over her clasped hands and passionate sorrow, so doubly touching in Italian.

When Edmund came home, I hastened to tell him, "Calliope is gone; her mother is dying." Would you believe it? he had met her in the streets of Pera, the merriest of the mad mob of street revellers. Her brother turns out to be *not* her brother, and of course we have sent to her relations to tell her that she need not trouble herself to return. Her message in answer was, that she *should* come back whether we liked it or not; that her mother was better, and that she should now feel happier and more contented at Orta-kioy. However, the grim Vassili promises to keep the garden gate bolted, and I hope to be no more tormented.

The old Armenian woman is reinstated now, as a naked-legged housemaid, in which capacity she scrubs the floors scratching like a hen, with a small birch rod in the hollow of her right foot. I thought this, by the bye, a most awkward and laborious process, and making up a little mat, and tucking up my dress, knelt down and showed her how we do it in England, in dumb-show of course, for Red-jacket and I possess not the vulgar aid of language in our inter-

esting communications. She looked very indignant, *extremely* so for a calm Eastern charwoman, and I, who thought I had been doing great things, was quite puzzled. At last I clapped my hands for Vassili to interpret. Red-jacket still stood in a magnificent attitude, her arms folded, and her little birch broom still tightly clasped in her dripping blue toes. "Tell the Coona," she said, "that we never kneel but to the Saints." I of course made a most humble apology, but always fly the approach of those dreadful red legs and the little birch rod.

But to return to Greek falsehood. It is certainly marvellous, from all that one hears and sees daily and hourly. How dangerous and dreadful, that elegant and clever untruth! The girl Calliope, for instance, mixed up and *used* truth with such fearful skill, to gain her end. We knew beyond a doubt, from those who were well acquainted with them, that she was devotedly fond of her mother, and was the principal support of both her and her sister. Most probably the mother really said those words at parting, "Ah, my Calliope, we may never meet again!" The very talking of her mother and repeating her words, lashed her wild, excitable and affectionate, yet lawless nature into real agitation. At least that is how I read her, and how I analyze what I hear of her countrymen and women.

It is a fearful state of things,—heart-aching, to see a fine people so completely false and demoralized, socially and politically. Even little children can scarcely be called innocent or truthful here. Why should it be permitted? is often a painful thought; as well as, how long can it last? A rotten apple can scarcely hang on the tree for ever.

\* From all I hear and observe, it seems to me that ages of Turkish misrule and corrupt example have had two opposite effects on two peoples of very opposite natures. The Turk, like a slow, phlegmatic lad at school, neglected, sinks into nothing; is quiet, stupid, contented, and unambitious; the clever boy, —the Greek,—uncontrolled, ill-treated, and with a bad example before him, turns his great talents to wickedness, and, to gain his own unscrupulous ends, uses his invention, his genius, his great eloquence, and his marvellous quickness, for the most degrading, when it might be turned to the highest purposes. But I must not venture into such difficult and perplexing subjects. Captain Burton says that I am in the first stage of English indignation and disgust. He says that in a few months he shall see me quietly seated on a divan, taking everything as matter of course, and not only reconciled, but thinking it is “Kismet,” or Fate, and better as it is. I replied, “May I become a tortoise first!”

## LETTER XXI.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.—HOUSEKEEPING.—DISCUSSING PRICES.—A GREEK LAUNDRRESS.—NEW YEAR'S MORNING.—SECLUSION OF THE TURKISH WOMEN.—THE CEMETERY.—THE PERSIAN AMBASSADOR.—BALL AT THE EMBASSY.

Orta-kioy, January 17th, 1856.

My dear Mother,

ON New Year's Eve we thought very much of you all in England. It was a lovely evening, as mild as Spring, and Edward Barker came down with a bunch of red and white roses for me, from his terraced garden, which must sound strange to you, frost-bound as I hear you are at home. He also brought a message from his mother and sisters, inviting us to spend the last day of the old year with them ; so I put on my cloak and off we started, my little white dog Fuad, who is now petted after the orthodox fashion of lap-dog votaries, washed, combed, and blue-ribboned, strutting on before, and valiantly defying street dogs who could swallow him up, foolish thing ! in a mi-

nute. Our man Vassili, and Mr. Burckhardt Barker's wild-looking Albanian, carried lanterns before us, after the fashion of the place. Edward and his young brother amused themselves by chinking their sticks on the stones, as the watchmen do, and presently the younger one, full of fun and boyish mischief, cried out the long wailing Turkish cry of "Yangin-var!" which means, there is a fire.

Nothing can be darker and quieter than a Turkish village at night. So profound is the silence, that you might almost believe the place to be deserted. However, an instant after our lively young friend's cry had sounded through the narrow, cloister-like streets, we could see the shadows of many forms moving rapidly across the lattices, no doubt to ask news of the watchmen, or to listen to their cry, of where the fire was.

"Get on," said Edward, "we shall have some angry Turk out upon us."

I caught up Fuad, and we hastily turned out of the street into another narrower still. The Greek men were in ecstasies, their lanterns rolling about in their laughter, from one heap of stones and mud to another. It was just like half-disturbing a few drowsy owls. Mr. Barker's house is higher up the hill than ours, and, after you have climbed up the steep stony little streets, there are three flights of

terraced steps to mount—which is very tiring at first, as indeed all walking is, in this part of the world.

We passed a very pleasant New Year's Eve. There were no sweet-sounding English bells to listen to, ringing the old year out, but we had music and an agreeable conversation on Eastern matters with Mr. Barker, who both knows a great deal and how to tell it pleasantly. His children are pretty, amiable little creatures, doing the greatest credit to their excellent mother, especially in a country like this. I have already told you how much kindness I have met with from Mrs. Barker and her daughters. Indeed I hardly know how we should have got on without them. Every Saturday morning, rain or shine, saw Miss Clara seated on my divan, with all the wretched Greek scrawls of my weekly bills before her. Then came a battle of two or three hours with milkman, butcher, and baker, poor savages! trying to take us in, and to charge double the proper price, because we were English.

Now, thanks to my kind friend, I know the proper price of everything, and my housekeeping grows less and less stormy every day. Washing is at present my greatest difficulty. There is a Greek lady in the village (I can call her nothing else but lady), who has sometimes condescended to return us a few torn, coffee-coloured things, which we can just recognize

as our own, and to ask in return about their value,— perhaps a little more. She is the most dignified little person, in the most dignified rags. I often wonder, when I look at her, whether she takes off that green jacket trimmed with fur, even on washing-day, and whether she does not often put down her iron, to wrap it round her, and stand with folded arms, like the queen of a ruined kingdom, as she does now. Sometimes I hear the sound of her loose slippers dragging over the matting of the outer room, as I am reading quietly alone. She strolls into my little drawing-room; “*Buon giorno, Signora!*” is the extent of her Italian. She then takes a majestic survey, first of myself, and then of the room, pats Fuad encouragingly, and chirps to the Bashis. She has left the “washing” on the divan in the next room. Oh, my poor collars! But it is worse than useless to complain, so I say nothing; only on asking, “*Quanti piastri?*” I find the sum which the lady asks, too ridiculous, compared with what my friend Miss Barker has told me to give. I remonstrate gently, by signs, and in Italian. She folds her arms, with an injured look, arranges the faded embroidered handkerchief round her head, and seats herself on the divan. Then I clap my hands for Vassili, whose very mustachios curl with ire when I tell him what is the matter. Then such a “row” takes place! you would think

that nothing but a good sharp Damascene blade could settle the question. At first I used to be rather bored at scenes like these, of almost daily occurrence, but now I know how long the storm will last, and what it means.

In this country there is no fixed price for anything—it is what can be got. If the debate is with any one who can speak Italian, I give them a volley myself; if only Greek or Turkish is understood, Vassili “goes in,” as the school-boys say, and interprets fire and fury for me. You cannot hear your own voice, or get in a single word, while this sharp and deadly skirmish goes on. I sit quietly doing whatever I may be about, or calmly stroking Fuad’s pretty white ears, and marvelling at the violence and gestures of the combatants, when, as suddenly as a squall drops on the Bosphorus, the storm ceases, your money is taken with the usual Eastern salutation, and your interpreter tells you that your hand is kissed with many thanks. This is a scene of last Monday especially.

I ventured to ask why the things looked worse than usual. The lady tucked her hands into the fur pockets of the green jacket, and asked indignantly what I could expect of things ironed on a chair (for it seems that her wretched hovel contains no table, and this accounts for the marks of rushes on the shirt-fronts). We then tacitly agree to drop the sub-

ject, and enter into an amicable conversation about the miseries of the Greeks, and Turkish oppression. She complained bitterly of the want and suffering of the poor, who worked for the Turks, feasting and idling. I was very sorry for her, and gave her a few little things for her children. I asked if she could come and help Red-jacket; "Not the next day;" it was Saint somebody's day. The next? No; it was St. somebody else's day; and between feast-days and fast-days, she could do nothing that week. I said I hoped she would not think I wished to say anything disrespectful of her religion, but it seemed to me that the observance of so many feast-days and fast-days kept her very poor, and her children very thin. She shrugged her shoulders, laughed, and said nothing. I hear from Vassili today, that two of her children are very ill. Heaven help them, poor things! for there are no nurses but ignorance and superstition here.

But to turn to a very different subject. I must tell you how we spent New Year's Day. Lady Stratford de Redcliffe gave a ball, for which I took caique into Pera as usual, and wended to Mrs. Mysseri's, my favourite quarters. It was a lovely day, the ships were dressed with flags, and the Bosphorus as gay and sparkling as it always is in sunshine.

To talk against this place is to talk against a

great beauty when she is not by,—she is false, she is treacherous, she has a thousand faults ;—even her splendid array costs pain and misery to others. Yet only to see her, is quite enough ;—you are charmed again, and forget everything but her fascination. This New Year's morning, these palace-fringed shores and many-tinted hills and cypress-shaded cemeteries, with here and there a distant bit of landscape which you have never seen before, brought out by the sun's rays resting fully upon it, looked even more varied and interesting than usual. The Sultan's snow-white palace, too, rises beautifully out of the dark blue water, which reflects even the purple pigeons upon its roof. As your caique darts by, you can often detect a shadowy form peeping through the close white lattice-work of the Seraglio windows, no doubt longing for liberty. I used to notice, some time ago, one window in which three or four flower-pots were set, and which were evidently taken great care of, by one of the fair prisoners. Then I noticed them faded and scorched by the sun, and now they are gone altogether. I wonder what has happened to their poor mistress. However, the Sultan's ladies proverbially enjoy greater liberty than any other Turkish women of rank here, and their yashmaks are certainly the thinnest. Some time ago they were frequently seen at the palace windows, but this

created great scandal, and a guard of Blacks now walk up and down the marble terrace beneath.

The higher the rank of the women here, the more closely they are guarded and shut up. Our great beauties are seen everywhere; a great beauty of the old and highest Turkish fashion is often married without ever having passed beyond the walls of the harem garden, and without having bheld the face of any other man than her father. This is the highest Turkish *ton*. Women of the lower class are comparatively free, and can go, even unattended, into the streets and bazaars whenever they like, but of course veiled and feridjeed, so that it would be impossible to recognize them. It being lovely weather on New Year's Day, there were hundreds of Turkish women "taking the air," some in telekis, guarded by Blacks, others on foot, shuffling along in their loose yellow slippers.

I was stopped by the crowd for a short time when we got out on the Bridge of Boats. I and my dress were examined with the greatest curiosity, for these shrouded dames never seem to tire of staring at Englishwomen. One very pretty creature in rather a thin veil, was quite charmed with the flounces of my dress, feeling them with her red-stained fingers, and saying, "Ghuzel, ghuzel!" which means, pretty. They have very simple, engaging ways, and seem so inclined to

love you, taking hold of one or two fingers, as children do, and looking into your face appealingly, which is very touching to me, for they seem to think us so free and happy, so different to themselves. I can say a few words of Turkish now, and hope soon to learn more. It is difficult, but a very fine and harmonious language,—charming when spoken by the women. My pretty friends on the Bridge were delighted when I said, “Allahà iss marladik !” which means, ‘Good-bye, God bless you !’ and which, it must be confessed, I had learned to say the evening before, like a parrot.

It was with great difficulty that Vassili forced a way for me through the dense crowds of Galata and Pera. The noise, shouting, dirt, and confusion, seem worse every time you go there. It is really frightful since the war, quite impossible to be conceived unless seen. However, we at last got to Mysseri’s, where I had agreed to spend the day with a friend. Edmund was enjoying a holiday, shooting at Kandilli, where he was to dine, and then join us at the ball in the evening.

Mysseri’s was all bustle and confusion. Officers had arrived from Scutari, Kulalee, and other places, to attend the ball. Poor Mrs. Mysseri was half distracted, for English, French, and Sardinians came pouring in with their servants and portmanteaus. The

great topic of conversation is the fall of Kars,—so gallantly defended, so cruelly allowed to fall. It is very perplexing and painful to listen to all this; and what have I not heard of the conduct of this war! Do not fail to read Mr. Duncan's book, called 'A Campaign with the Turks in Asia;' it is very good, and tells you much about Kars, and its thievish Pashas, like wasps in a hive.

It was curious to talk over all these things about the war, walking again with a friend in the cemetery, among thousands of clustered turban-stones and gigantic cypress-trees. There is a magnificent view of Stamboul from the ancient well on which we sat, and of the seven ruined arches of the Roman aqueduct, which still speak boldly of old Rome across the clear blue sky, even among the minarets.

Lower down, in a row of melancholy-looking houses, looking on the dark slopes of the burial-ground, I found the house in which my father once lived for a year. It was a *pension*, or boarding-house, in those days (there were no hotels then,) kept by a Madame Josephine somebody, who has long since slept in the Frank burial-ground at Pera. He little thought that I should ever stand on the threshold of that door, and look on the same headless Janissary-stones, and on the same mournful, dreary-looking trees! Today a small flock of sheep and goats were browsing there,

tended by a picturesque and ragged shepherd. The reverence with which the Turks are said to regard their cemeteries seems to consist, at least in these days, in merely letting them alone. Hundreds of stones have fallen down in these two great cemeteries, and in many smaller ones which I have visited, and lie mouldering on the ground. On the side next to Pera, dogs, geese, and fowls stroll in, and an occasional donkey. Goats browsing, or climbing over the stones, and children swinging, are constantly seen. But in these days the Turks seem to neglect everything, and the same melancholy state of decay is visible everywhere.

On leaving the cemetery in order to regain the streets, we had to walk over a heap of garbage large enough to distemper a whole city. It was so large, that small paths or tracks had been made across it, in which your foot often sank above the ankle. A band of ferocious street dogs were playing, barking, and basking on it. Presently we came to a large puddle of filthy water. One of the largest fallen tombstones had been placed across it, and Turks, Greeks, and Franks were glad enough to avail themselves of it as a temporary bridge. So much for the sacredness and good keeping of Turkish cemeteries !

Well, but for the ball at last, which was really a

very beautiful sight ; such a splendid gathering of English, French, and Sardinian officers, plenty of stars and orders, and plenty of diamonds. An ordinary ball will seem but a very dull affair after such as this. There were some Armenian ladies literally covered with diamonds ; they sat still and glistened (at least their jewels did), but were remarkable, I should think, for nothing else. One of them had, too, a spray of brilliants on each side of her head, made to represent a wide wreath of laurel or bay, and the same kind of branch *en corsage*, with enormous loops of truly Oriental pearls.

Most of the Turkish Ministers were present, one or two of them mild, gentlemanly-looking men, but I cannot say much for the rest. I should think that they cannot enjoy a ball much. Most of them sit, quietly talking, on the sofas,—others walk through the rooms and corridors, holding each other by the hand, after the manner of little boys. Rustim Bey is quite of the modern European school, and has positively learned to dance, no doubt to the great disgust of many a true Mussulman. He asked me the usual question of how I liked this country ; and of the *country* I was able to speak with enthusiasm, just lightly touching on the things which we English missed, roads, etc. etc. A Pasha, who spoke Italian pretty well, hoped I should live long among them ; a wish

which I devoutly trusted, *sotto voce*, might never be realized.

The Persian Ambassador came late, with his suite, walked through the rooms with the Oriental attaché, looked at the dancers with quiet amazement, and then seated himself on a low divan: a curious-looking old man, according to our notions of dress, but after all, the most sensible-looking person in the world; he wore a deliciously soft flowered dressing-gown, a long grey beard, through which some very fine diamonds on his breast glistened now and then, and a high conical cap of curly black lambskin. Lord Stratford conversed for some time with this remarkable old gentleman, through Mr. Smythe. I heard that his Lordship considered the conversation not very satisfactory with regard to the alliance of Persia with England. Persia is too much exposed to the tender mercies of the Russians, who, after all, manage to keep their neighbours in great awe. Even the Turks are beginning to be very doubtful as to the ultimate success of the Allies. England has lost dreadfully in military reputation lately, I am sorry to say.

It was three in the morning when we left the ball-room, and they were then dancing 'Sir Roger de Coverley.' A more splendid and varied assemblage could hardly be imagined, although there was rather a scarcity of ladies. We returned to Mysseri's as

usual. Most of the officers had ridden to the ball, to avoid getting splashed with mud as those on foot must be, and the crowds of horses and orderlies in the courtyard of the palace, amongst a mob of Greeks, and the Turkish guard drawn up around, looked very strange in the glare of torches and lanterns, large and small.

But I must say good-night; being fairly tired out with my long letter, and after all I do not feel sure that it will be an interesting one to you. I have always so much to say, that I begin to write off that which first comes into my head, without thinking enough, perhaps, of what you would like best. When the weather is more settled I am going to pay a visit to one or two harems, to which I am offered an introduction; then to see the mosque of Santa Sophia, and the Sultan's new Palace;—in fact, to “do the lions” of Constantinople, which I have not done yet, for various reasons; one of which is, the almost inexplicable aversion I have to run over beaten ground, or to go where I am told “everybody” goes.

## LETTER XXII.

EASTERN CIVILIZATION.—THE REFORMING SULTAN.—THE LEVANTINE POPULATION.—THEIR IGNORANCE AND PRETENSION.—EARLY FLIRTATIONS.—LARGE FAMILIES.—A LEVANTINE YOUNG LADY.

Orta-kioy, January 20th, 1855.

My dear Mother,

ALL well, and a packet in from England, and no doubt we shall have letters from home. We hear that a telegraphic despatch has arrived, announcing that peace is almost certain, and trust it may be true. What sorrowful stories one hears here ! People ought to be very happy who are safe at home, and have not lost those dearest to them by some violent or distressing death. We do not think much of the glory of the war so near the scene of action. One can only hope and believe that much ultimate good may come of it, but it is very disheartening to see the almost hopeless state of things here, and what unsatisfactory races of people we have been helping at such a cost. Civilization seems to have begun

the wrong way, and to have introduced its follies and vices before anything else. The worst people are those most Europeanized, and the prejudiced and intolerant Mussulman, who hates us, is far better than the unprincipled renegade who cheats us. In dress it is just the same. First of all, Sultan Mahmoud, the Reformer, waged war against the turban, which not only admirably suits the Turkish cast of countenance, but protects the head from the burning rays of the sun so much better than its substitute, the fez. Next the Sultan tried to put down beards, the pride and glory of Mussulmans, which not only gave great offence and sorrow, but greatly disfigured men with small and receding jaws. There are a few fine beards left, though; and they still flourish in undisturbed magnificence in the provinces. Preziosa's charming sketches will no doubt be much more valuable as pictures of Eastern life, when all is altered here, and the European stiff, ugly dress, takes the place of flowing robes and rich colouring.

As you know, the Turks, since the days of Osman, have been distinguished as splendid military horsemen. The Sultan has taken away their short stirrups, and, in comparison, they can hardly ride at all. This is certainly an extraordinary country for doing everything the wrong way (at least the little that is done at all), and for producing incompetent or wicked

rulers. Then the waifs and strays of all nations settled here,—what a set they are, and how ashamed their respective mother-countries would be to own them! People living like flies in the sun, with no moral or religious existence, no social life, no love of country; no schools, no means of instruction; they seem to belong to no one, and no one feels any responsibility about them. The Greek and Levantine women are generally, and indeed almost necessarily, ignorant, tattling, and insipid. The Levantines are a thoroughly mongrel race, despising the two dominant races, and yet possessing all their faults without anything that is good in either. A would-be Periote fine lady figures as a badly over-dressed Frenchwoman in an evening, and lounges on a divan in true Eastern indolence of a morning—only in a faded dressing-gown and shoes down at the heel, instead of the elegant robe and fair naked foot and embroidered slipper of the real Turkish lady. A Turkish lady's ignorance, too, does not matter, in her quiet garden life, for it is almost like that of a child. A Levantine is detestably pretentious, if she has chanced to learn to play a waltz badly of some wandering music-master, or can write a note of five lines so as to be intelligible, or to equal one by an English maid-of-all-work.

They begin their silly, trumpery love-affairs long

before our English children are out of their pinnafores. How often I have longed to carry off some wretched child, beflowered and bedizened, flirting away in cast-off fashions and with the most ridiculous airs in the world, and first to whip her soundly with a good and true English birch, then put her to bed before midnight (their usual hour), and array her poor wasted and pinched-up figure in good brown-holland, strap shoes, and plain straw hat the next morning, preparatory to the process of making her a child again, if possible.

The Levantines like to be considered English or French, according as their pretensions to either origin are nearest. They worship and imitate both, with a vulgar notion of making themselves "smart" and "genteel" above their neighbours, à la Morleena Kennigs. They affect to despise everything here, and are always speaking of some cousin or friend who has been to England, and are dying to go themselves, confident of making a sensation. They visit you and flatter you, and beg the patterns of your gown and bonnet, and try to find out how many pocket-handkerchiefs you have got, and how you have lived in England, and if you are acquainted with Lady this or Lady that, whose name they may have seen in some stray Album of 1821. They all speak through their noses, with a terrible twang. They chatter or cackle, they

do not talk ; and chatter a trifle threadbare too. The most ambitious get a few shilling copies of bad novels and consider themselves literary personages. They dress their hair a perfect caricature of some way in which it was worn in Paris and London a year ago, and consider themselves leaders of fashion. They gossip and laugh with the Greek servants, and complain of them. Like them, they intrigue and tell falsehoods by bushels, but not with their happy invention and native grace. They are a terrible tissue of dirt and finery, ignorance and pretension. They can do nothing well, and you feel that nothing is in them, which is worse. Both Greeks and Turks seem to hold them in very light estimation. I said one day to Vassili, “ But Madame So-and-so said so.” He said, “ The English speak the truth ” (a piece of Greek flattery to me, I suppose), “ but all the Levantines ” (with a gesture of disgust) “ are liars.” I am afraid there is a great deal of truth in this, as well as in many other things that are said of them, and they are certainly not well calculated to give the people of the country a flattering notion of Europeans.

The Levantines almost invariably have families here so large as to be better suited to rabbits and mice, or any animal of gregarious and inexpensive habits, rather than to human beings. I have seen a faded, slovenly mother, with children of all ages, from a daughter

looking as old as herself to a baby in arms. Such mothers often tell you that they were married here at fifteen, and delicately hinting that they have been grandmothers for some time, look down with a simper, and evidently expect a compliment on their youthful looks. Poor faded things they generally are ! up at midnight from babyhood, as they have been. As years go on, there are successions of babies, more idle, useless, Greek and Albanian servants, more household confusion and complaint. You may imagine what is the fate of the elder children. In a conversation of the most melancholy ignorance, the daughter of a rich Levantine merchant said to me : " Ma never has time to consider what to do with us, the little ones and the servants are such a bother, and the baby is always crying. There have been one or two schools here, but they never lasted [a yawn],—always gave up—I don't know why [another yawn]; perhaps because it didn't pay, or some stupid reason or other. Ma had a governess for us once. Uncle Frank got her out from England. She cost Ma a great deal, and she was very cross to us (we plagued her finely though). These governesses are always doing something disagreeable when they come out here ; they either get the cholera, or get married, just as you are beginning to get on. Our creature got married, nasty sly thing ; and only fancy, she was actually engaged,

it seems, when she came to us, only she couldn't marry because they had nothing to live upon, or some excuse of that kind, I know Ma said." I assure you that this is really pretty Stella's conversation, or rather drawl, as she lay on the sofa after breakfast one morning. A few questions put to me will give you a further idea of what the Levantine or Periote girls are as companions.

"It is horridly dull here, Mrs. Hornby" (with a doleful yawn). "Really I don't know how we shall get through the day." I must tell you that we were visitors at one of the loveliest villages on the Bosphorus, with a most exquisite view from the drawing-room window,—books and music,—a charming garden, our host's pride and delight,—and nothing to do but to amuse ourselves till the gentlemen returned in the evening. I thought how much I should have enjoyed being alone there without this tiresome, insipid girl; but, after looking with feelings of despair at a table covered with new books from England, I felt that I must give everything up for gossip—she took hold of me in such a despairing manner. "I wish we were at Smyrna: there are plenty of officers there, and it's so nice; I'm afraid you will be very dull here. Mr. Host is very kind, but he's a queer man, who does not care for dancing nor anything else that's pleasant; he only cares for a lot of dry, rubbishing books, and

that nasty dull garden, where I am sure there's nothing to see.

"I suppose you're fond of reading, Mrs. Hornby?" I replied that I was. "Ah, the English have written some very pretty things; I have read a great deal at one time and another. I think one ought to be intellectual in a nasty, dull country like this, with nothing but those stupid Turks to look at. I think I almost know by heart every number of the 'Family Herald.' Don't you read the 'Family Herald'? La, you quite surprise me! It's so pretty! Now you should read 'Rosalie, or the Secret Attachment,' and 'Lady Matilda Wilhelmina,' and 'Sighs and Tears, from Anastasia's Scrap-book.' I suppose you've read Byron? There's a little house, close to Pa's, at Smyrna, where he lived once. I don't know what he meant by coming out here, I'm sure. I suppose, being a lord, he had plenty of friends in England. He was a very queer man,—eccentric, don't you call it? The old Turkish gardener has often told Pa how the English lord used to frighten him, walking up and down the little orchard and talking loud to himself, and throwing his arms about. I suppose that's the way he wrote his poetry.

"He went to Greece after that, to look after some property that had been left him, they said at Smyrna, but he died in some outlandish place or other. It was

very funny of him, when he might have been so comfortable in England. He had a very grand funeral in England, hadn't he?" I replied that I thought not, and that to the best of my recollection his heart was taken to Newstead and buried quietly there.

"Oh, indeed, how funny! I thought he had a very grand funeral in London, for I remember reading a poem, a long time ago, where there was something about a 'funeral note' and 'his martial cloak around him,' so I thought it was Byron; Ma said so."

Here ended the literary part of our conversation, which I assure you is almost *verbatim*, only I cannot put in all the yawns, and the nasal drawl of this beautiful girl of nineteen, who is, I must add, quite above the average of Levantines. One of these heard an Englishman laughingly say something about the Ides of March the other evening at an Embassy party. I suppose she thought that he alluded to beans, or some other vegetable, for she said very promptly, "The green peas are not up yet." (Whenever we have any beans now, we call them the Ides of March.) There is certainly much to be done in this part of the world.

## LETTER XXIII.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.—COSTUMES.—GREEK WOMEN.—REVELS.—VISIT TO AN ARMENIAN FAMILY.—VASSILI.—INTERVIEW WITH A BASHI-BAZOUK.—VILLAGERS.—TURKISH CHILDREN.

Orta-kioy, January 24th, 1856.

My dear Mr. Hornby,

I TOLD you, in a former letter, how we spent New Year's Day at Constantinople. The Greek New Year's Day falls upon the 13th of our new year. The old watchman chanted for prayers at daybreak, at the doors of all Greek houses. Except the poorest of the poor, every one sported something new and gay on that day. Some of the embroidered Greek and Albanian jackets displayed by the young beaux were really beautiful,—scarlet braided with gold, and others green and gold. The Albanian jacket is worn with the sleeves hanging over the shoulder, like those of our Hussars. How strange and dark English dresses will seem to me, after all these brilliant colours! How will my eyes endure a fustian jacket and hideous

English hat, or an English villager's waistcoat, after having been so charmed with every variety of picturesque form and brilliant colour? With the beautifully embroidered scarlet and gold jacket, for instance, you often see full trousers of dark rich green, bound round the waist by a many-coloured scarf, into which is stuck a richly-mounted yataghan, or silver-embossed pistol,—frequently both. The under-jacket, or waistcoat, is also richly embroidered, and with a double row of dead gold buttons. Three or four rows of silver chain, just like a *châtelaine*, complete the gala dress of a Greek village beau. As it is winter, I must not, however, forget his gaily-embroidered leggings, which are something like the Indian mocassin. His moustache is perfect, pointed, and the pride and delight of his life. A few dark curls peep from under his fez, and he toys with his cigarette with the air of a prince. Alas for our village belles, if he were but to saunter among them some sunny evening! and alas for the honest fustian coat and ugly English hat!

The Greeks seem to be fond of paying visits on New Year's Day. I was greatly amused, watching from my window different groups of them winding round the hill or crossing the narrow road halfway down the valley. Some of the women still wore the beautiful Greek dress, with fine plaits of hair wreathed round their heads, or handkerchiefs charmingly put

on, the coloured trimming so arranged as to form a chaplet round the brow. I must bring home some of this pretty trimming, so like leaves and flowers. But I am sorry to say that the national dress of the Greek women is disappearing in these parts much more rapidly than that of the men, and they disfigure themselves sadly by aping English and French fashions. I was grieved to hear last autumn that some caiquees' wives and daughters had made their appearance at the Sweet Waters of Asia perfect scarecrows, from an absurd attempt to copy the dress of some Frenchwoman whom they had seen and admired. What a pity that civilization should begin the wrong way! In the villages, however, this painful transition state is not so much seen as at Pera, and Orta-kioy certainly presented a genuine picture of Eastern life on New Year's Day.

There was plenty of dancing and singing going on in the valley, if a nasal kind of chanting can be called singing. Long after midnight the wind, setting in towards our hill, bore sounds of revelry, and the monotonous roll of a little drum, which seems to be the favourite accompaniment of the Romaika, or Greek dance. The Greeks are a marvellously active, restless race. The night's revels are scarcely over, when, at dawn, the watchman chants to prayer. They shout and gesticulate almost as loudly in the Mass,

as they did half an hour before in the rude Romaika. I went to one of their religious services some time ago, and was painfully impressed with the glare and tinsel, and the sensual, dirty appearance of the priests, who looked more like robed brigands than anything else.

The pictures of saints and martyrs are extremely hideous, nearly black, and barbarously ornamented with silver or tin hands and "glories." Those who are able to make a rich offering will order the entire picture of a saint to be covered with silver, except the face, which peeps darkly through. The people bend and pray with extraordinary reverence and devotion before these pictures, many of which are of great antiquity.

My Armenian neighbours were early at prayers on New Year's morning. At a later hour, Fuad and I were pacing up and down our little trim garden, and I gathered a few violets to remind me of England. It was a lovely morning, and we watched three or four swans flying northward; and long flights of cormorants pursuing their way on the opposite coast, sometimes in straight lines, then in a dense body, then in the form of an arrow, then in a strange and fantastic manner, like a long and undulating serpent. Poor Simione, the mute, came to gather me a few stray flowers which the winter storms had left; roses and

verbenas have lasted longest here. His mother looked out from her lattice, smiled, and saluted me sweetly as usual: she has such a mild and placid face. She asked me something by signs, but I could not understand it, and shook my head despondingly, on which she sent Antonio down with a note written in his ever-ready Italian. These little epistles amuse us so much that I preserve them carefully, and send you a translation of this morning's.

“ Dearest and illustrious Lodger,

“ My widowed mother and my sisters salute you tenderly and with all their hearts on this New Year's morning, and your General [Antonio will persist in calling Edmund, Signor Generale]. They wish to know if your house pleases you, if you are contented, and if they can do anything to serve you. They hope that the child you love so much is well, and that God may bless you with great prosperity. They thank you for the good dish with which you have regaled them. Always, dearest lady, your friend and servant,

“ ANTONIO ALMIRA.”

I made signs of thanks, and that I would write a further reply. They begged me to walk into their house, which I did, admiring the dim old hall, with an orange-tree on each side of the footworn steps,

its broken marble fountain, trellised roof, and the quaintly-painted birds and flowers and pomegranates on its whitewashed walls.

The whole house looked dilapidated and dismantled, and everything wore the air of an impoverished and decayed family. The divans and even footstools were still covered with black, as mourning for the husband and father; heavy hangings to the doorways of the vast and numerous rooms were of the same sad hue; the only gay thing was a picture of the Virgin and Child, which was decked out with flowers and tiny wax tapers in honour of the New Year. Huge *braseros* stood in the principal room of the first suite of apartments, which is evidently that generally used by the family, and where I always see the sisters sitting at their embroidery, as I walk in my garden; but there was no fire, and my dear old friend looked pale and cold in her thin and faded mourning. I wrote my note of the kindest words I could possibly pen, and we sat on the divan admiring the lovely view. Far and wide, how beautiful everything looked in the bright morning sun! People here learn to sit quietly, while the eye roams about with the keenest pleasure.

I was now served with sweetmeats; Dhudu and poor Oscu vying with each other affectionately to do me honour. Neither of them would sit before

their mother and myself, on so state an occasion as my first visit. Antonio stood by my side, pencil in hand, by the aid of which and of signs we kept up an animated conversation. How little serves to please when there is really the wish on both sides! Simione placed a little inlaid table before his mother and myself, and I saw with alarm that they intended to give me a feast. First, Dhudu handed sweets, cherries delicately preserved, and a rare old china jar full of preserved rose-leaves from Persia; then Oscu presented two large glass cups of water with her thin pale hands; after which came delicious little cups of fragrant coffee, and a dish of figs from Smyrna, mixed with bitter almonds. The old lady, who seemed to take as much affectionate pride in cramming me as if I had been a darling schoolboy home for the holidays, now tore some of the largest of the figs open with her fingers, and, stuffing them with the almonds, presented them to me one by one. You may fancy the dismay with which I was filled, on seeing the prompt and zealous preparation of these boluses. I felt that I must be ill, and gave myself up for lost; my situation was indeed so ludicrous that I laughed outright, and they thought that I was highly delighted. Poor things! they have few visitors, and but little to amuse their lonely life; so I considered that one fit of indigestion could not do me much harm, and yielded

to the fun and amusement of the fête. How delighted the dear old lady was to please me! How fast she peeled the oranges, and popped little pieces on to the pounded sugar on my plate, and helped me to large pink slices of preserved quince, and talked of me to her daughters, and patted my hand affectionately; Antonio and Simione looking on approvingly all the time, as proud as if they were entertaining a princess—such kind and simple people are these! At last I thought the feast was happily ended; but, alas! Dhudu opened a fine rich-coloured pomegranate, and, scooping out all its bright and shining seeds, placed them, sprinkled with fine white sugar, before me. Oh for the enchanted cock of the Arabian Nights' story, thought I, to pick them all up for me! But my philosophy could go no further; I was obliged politely but firmly to refuse both that last dainty and also a cigarette made by the fair hands of Dhudu. However, the ladies each took one, and, smoking with great complacency, we had a little quiet chat about England and things in general, and then I took my departure, amid much bowing and many adieus. They all came down to the little garden-steps of our door with great ceremony. I must not forget to tell you that Fuad was of the party, kissed and romped with by the ladies, and regaled with almost as many sweets as his mistress, which however,

thorough Eastern as he is, seemed to afford him unmitigated satisfaction.

Vassili is very kind to my little dog, and sometimes takes him into the village for exercise; Fuad likes the crowded, narrow streets better than I do. Vassili is certainly an oddity; he is generally extremely gloomy, and only condescends to be cheerful upon rare occasions. I believe he seldom speaks to Georgy, our new and handsome sais; but his great friend is Nicola, Mr. Wilkin's man, who has known him for years. Nicola says that Vassili was once very "well off," but was robbed at Cairo, by an Egyptian, of everything he had in the world, which has soured his temper ever since. So whenever he looks more gloomy than usual, we say that the "robbery in Egypt" is full upon him. He has a wife and four children at Smyrna, and sends off his wages to them the moment he gets them. He always asks if the "Signorina" is well, when he sees me reading letters from England. I thank him, and say "Yes." He then invariably adds, in Italian, "Heaven be praised! the young are always charming." I said one day to him, out of gratitude for his inquiries, "And how are your children, Vassili; have you heard from them lately?" This offended his taciturnity; he had not bargained to be so much more gracious than usual, and returned a snappish

reply of, "Poor men's children are always well, and with great appetites." Thinking he would be pleased to hear of the Sultan's firman in favour of the Greeks, I told him of it one day when he was laying the cloth; but he only growled out from under his black moustache, "I dare say our Patriarch has given some Pasha a heap of money for it; *we* shall get nothing by it." Vassili takes to heart greatly the oppression and poverty of his countrymen, but we think that the robbery in Egypt is the principal cause of his misanthropy and melancholy. Vassili takes great delight in cooking, and places a favourite dish upon the table with a grim look of satisfaction. He was quite in despair last week when Edmund only took invalid's allowance. The way in which I always show anxiety is by not eating, and the other day, when everything went away untouched, he exclaimed angrily, "Che ha Vossignoria, che non mangia?"—(What is the matter with you, Ma'am, that you do not eat?) I took the rebuke meekly, and spoke of want of exercise, etc. •

The other night he asked leave of Edmund to bring in a Bashi-Bazouk, a friend of his, who was anxious to join the Turkish Contingent with a thousand men. The Bashi came up,—a fine savage-looking fellow, with a sashful of yataghans and silver-mounted pistols. Mr. Wilkin was here, who speaks Turkish. At first the

Bashi would not say a word. We found this was because of Antonio the Armenian, who was quietly sitting smoking by our stove. When he was gone, the Bashi became eloquent about what his men would do and dare. Edmund and I thought it a pity that we had not made the Bashi's acquaintance before the fall of Kars, as with another thousand such free-lances we might have cut our way to them with a few camel-loads of provisions. As it is, he has written to General Vivian, now in England. Some time ago the Contingent were greatly in want of recruits. Vassili and Georgy are extremely anxious about this affair, and stood on the stairs while the conference lasted in our outer room. Espinu tells me that Vassili is to have a new coat, and Georgy a sword, if the Bashi and his men are accepted by the General.

We have often questions asked of us by the village people. I found a Turk waiting in our outer room the other day, who evidently wished to ask some favour. He could not speak Italian, and Vassili was out; so he went away disappointed. Another day I met him in the garden, and then Vassili told me that he wanted Edmund to write to General Vivian about his brother Omar, a Captain in the Contingent, who had left his family in his charge. The wife was ill, and pined to see him. They were also falling into great poverty from her sickness, he having left them

only a hundred piastres (about fifteen shillings) a month. Edmund will do what he can to get Omar leave of absence.

The three little Turkish children were brought to see me yesterday, two boys and a girl, the latter a perfect beauty, but dressed in pale lilac and yellow gauze,—on such a cold day,—embroidered slippers, and no stockings. She laughed at the few Turkish words I was able to speak, sat down with gravity on the divan, and gave me the kiss I asked for. We then discussed a few sweetmeats, and I took her down to her uncle, who remained in the garden, no persuasion having the slightest effect in inducing him to enter a lady's room.

With the old-fashioned Turks you must be very careful not to offend their notions of female delicacy. I used to offer my hand, but they evidently think it so indecorous that I have left it off, except to those few who have mixed with Europeans. Dr. Zohrab tells me he has often been sent for to a great man's sick wife or slave, and has been shown a heap of shawls lying upon a sofa, and told to prescribe for it: in extreme cases only was he allowed to see the face or touch the hand. These poor women are almost constantly ailing from want of air and exercise: the higher their rank, the more they are shut up. Bleeding in the arm and foot is a common remedy,

even among the Armenians. My friend Dhudu came limping in from this cause the other day : I said to her brother, in Italian, that a good walk would have been better for her.

The minarets of the mosques here, and the opposite ones of Kulalee, were illuminated the night before last in celebration of Mahomet's birthday. It is so pretty to watch the wreaths of lamps glittering in the darkness, high in air.

But I must say adieu. Colonel Ibor has just come down, and dinner will soon be ready. I told you we had a flying visit from Mr. Mansfield, on his way to the Crimea ; he stole a pot of Vassili's preserves for his friends there. Captain Giffard could not come, as his ship was to sail that very day.

Mr. Gisborne has brought me a beautiful white cloak (*burnous*) from Cairo. He is delighted with Egypt, at least with the country, antiquities, and climate ; the people are as oppressed and as miserable as they are here, although a far livelier race.

Admiral Slade is coming to see us tomorrow, so I shall have plenty of Turkish news. The wind is still bringing snow and frost from the north ; I fear Edmund will not lose his severe cold while it lasts. Love to you all.

## LETTER XXIV.

WINTER LIFE ON THE BOSPHORUS.—ARMENIAN BISHOP.—BILL OF FARE.—THE PIANOFORTE.—CURES FOR NEURALGIA.—WRECKS FROM THE BLACK SEA.—POOR JEWS.

Orta-kioy, January 29th, 1856.

My dearest Mother,

You wish to know what sort of a life it is on the Bosphorus in winter-time. Mine is certainly a strange one, and of great extremes, for I am either alone for hours here, or in the midst of crowds at Pera, when the Ambassadress's invitations summon me. Edmund usually leaves home about nine in the morning. Fuad and I generally accompany him to the pretty little stable-yard, where there is an ancient-looking well, and a drooping willow whose branches wave to the ground. Our new Sais, a remarkably handsome Greek, who, in his rich embroidery, looks exactly like the portraits of Conrad in drawing-room copies of the 'Corsair,' keeps his stable in the nicest order: on saints' days and holidays a

pretty wreath of flowers is always arched over the door. He sleeps there, on a few raised planks, covered with a quilted Turkish counterpane. On a little bracket by the side of this rude bed is an antique-shaped pretty vase of flowers; and, close by, hangs an instrument, something like a small guitar, on which Georgy plays of an evening to a select friend or two. Georgy takes vast pride in his appearance, and loves his horses dearly, next only to his black Maltese dog,—an elfish-looking beast, with a few red beads hung by a stout string round his neck, as a charm against the dreaded evil eye.

Well, Fuad and I see them off, and admire “Sultan’s” arched neck and shining skin; he is what they call here a golden bay. Georgy just bestows one slight glance on some Greek girls who are admiring him from an opposite casement, and then, mounting “Turkish Johnny,” gallops after his master, who is slowly winding down the hill. I wave my hand, Vassili snappishly calls Fuad in, shuts to the gates, and we are alone until seven in the evening.

Our great mastiff has arrived from Trebizond; he is a magnificent creature, and we have named him Arslan, or Lion. I am afraid he misses the liberty of his free mountain-life, and think that both he and I feel rather like prisoners, as we pace up and down the tiny paths of our trim shawl-pattern garden. Fuad,

full of fun and frolic, affords a striking contrast to his grave demeanour and gigantic proportions. Arslan and Fuad looking out of my window, would make a most amusing sketch. Dignified as he is, Arslan does not despise a morning lounge on the divan. If Fuad is too frolicsome, Arslan holds him down between his huge paws, where he looks like a little white struggling mouse. Sometimes the two play together in the most absurd manner, Arslan taking Fuad up in his mouth like a snowball.

Nothing can be more perfect than my solitude is at times. You know I have often wished to be quite alone for several months, that I might do what I liked without being disturbed. Now I have certainly got my wish. My day is so long that I can afford to sit on the divan beneath my windows, dreaming for hours, looking out over the blue Bosphorus and the hills beyond, or noting all that takes place in the valley beneath, and watching the passers-by.

The Armenian Bishop and his wife in the latticed house opposite have many visitors; they seem to be of the old school, and the lady is always closely veiled and muffled in a feridjee whenever she goes out. I have seen her twice in her garden, and once in the ruined garden-plot beside it, "gathering simples," and she then wears the full trousers and jacket of

Eastern costume. Veiled ladies often call at this ancient house. After knocking at the quaintest-looking old knocker in the world, an old Armenian servitor admits them courteously into the high-walled courtyard, and presently we, from the divan, can see their shadowy forms flit across the lattices of the second floor, evidently the women's apartment. Robed priests are also frequent visitors, and these are admitted to the rooms on the ground-floor, whence the Bishop himself often emerges to give alms to a wandering pilgrim, or to buy sweetmeats of a great friend of Fuad's and mine, who carries the most delicious condiments about, on a pretty painted stand. There are three beautiful children in this house. Two little boys play about in the courtyard, and sometimes the nurse holds the baby above the lattice for me to smile and wave my hand to it. We are told that the Bishop wishes to make our acquaintance, and intends calling on us. I should have thought that our military visitors would have rather puzzled him; for many red-coats find their way here on their way to and from the Crimea, and may be often seen joining the canine party on the divan under the window, to talk with delight of old friends, old times, and news from home; all of which must be very shocking to Eastern notions of propriety.

Vassili's reputation has certainly caused an in-

creased amount of affectionate attention from our friends. Our little dinners are pronounced delightful. Only fancy the treat of excellent soup, delicious red mullet, lamb and pistachio-nuts, duck stewed with chestnuts, and quails in vine-leaves, to these half-famished men of Asia Minor and the camp in the Crimea! There is some pleasure in being hostess here in these days of war and famine; something more than giving a dinner-party, in feeling that you have been feeding a favourite son or a hungry husband.

But to give you an idea of what an English-woman's life is here. After my stroll in the garden, and gossiping lounge on the divan, and feeding the Bashi-Bazouks, and arranging a few flowers, I turn to the poor old pianoforte, which four stout hamals, directed by Vassili, carried upstairs into the salaam-lik for me the other day. We were fortunate enough to find a young German belonging to the Opera at Pera, who by degrees got the poor instrument into something like tune. I was much amused at Dhudu's explanation of its being so much out of order. I said, one day, through Miss Clara Barker, who was with me, "How is it that so new and good an instrument is so rusty and shaken?" Dhudu replied, in her quiet gentle way, that some time ago they were staying at a country-house by the seaside, when a fire broke out, and they were obliged to

throw the piano out of the window. "It fell into the sea," said Dhudu, "and has never been quite in tune since." They are delighted to have it restored, and it is the greatest pleasure I have, next to my letters, to sing and play for hours, until poor Fuad, after lying long and patiently at my feet, can bear it no longer, and sits up on his hind legs, entreating with his black bead-eyes that I will leave off. Then I pace up and down for an hour or more by way of exercise, quick march, to circulate my blood; for the stove in the inner room gives but little heat, and the weather is so piercingly cold, that I am obliged, whilst writing or singing, to wear Edmund's tiger-skin. How you would laugh to see me, with the paws crossed over my shoulders, sitting alone so silently that the little bright-eyed mice come out fearlessly to eat bread and milk out of Fuad's saucer by the window!

The kitchen is in the garden, and quite away from the house. On snowy days our hall-door is closed; and when the little Greek maid, whom Mrs. Barker kindly lends me for an hour or two in a morning, is gone, I pace up and down, as lonely as Mariana in the moated grange. Towards evening Vassili comes in with a replenished basket of wood for the stove, which he puts in silently. This quiet life seems to suit him well. He told me the other day that the

Armenian lady had asked him how I passed my time, so much alone as I was : he replied, "Scribe e legge, legge e scrive," (She writes and reads, and reads and writes.) This made the dear old lady very uneasy about me ; and this morning she paid me a long visit, with Antonio, whose fine dark eyes were full of anxious kindness, as he wrote, in Italian, entreaties that I would take more care of myself, and that I would consent to see the Imaum of the mosque here, in order to cure my neuralgia. They consider him, of course, an "idolater," wrote Antonio, but fully believe that he possesses the art of charming away pain by passing his fingers over the part affected. The old lady illustrated his treatment by pressing her fingers down the side of my head and throat, where I have lately suffered acute pain. It certainly relieved me very much, and from the extraordinary cures which she tells me the Imaum has performed, I should think the Turks are good mesmerists. However, I did not promise to try either this remedy, or the usual infallible Mussulman medicine of a verse of the Koran inscribed on a slip of paper and dissolved in water. My kind neighbours' sympathy did me great good, and I believe that a fireplace, and good stone walls, instead of thin planks, would do still more.

The weather has been very severe. I often see, in a morning, mere hulls of vessels towed down from

the Black Sea,—rigging, masts, all swept away. The cold of the East is sharp and pinching—just as if old Winter had caught you between his finger and thumb. How the poor must suffer in this miserable valley ! I often look, in a morning, to see if the tents in the ruins are still standing among the pools of mud and water, and think with horror that they are the only shelter of many children, and even babies. A few wretched wooden houses are inhabited only by Jews : the casements are still unfinished, and the famished and dripping wild-dogs prowl in and out at their pleasure. On Friday evenings these poor Jew people light little lamps for their expected Messiah ; they flicker faintly over a scene of wretchedness such as only an Eastern village can show.

But I must say adieu. The twilight is short here, and the Muezzin is calling the faithful to evening prayer. My little stove is burning brightly, my kettle singing its usual merry tune, my birds settling to roost, and Fuad watching for his master's return. So you see how cheerful I am after all.

## LETTER XXV.

GOING TO A BALL.—THE TELEKI.—JOURNEY TO PERA. —MONUMENTS.—ADMINISTRATION.—DOLMA BATCHE.—BAD ROADS.—CEMETERY AT PERA.—CYPRESSES.—SOLDIERS.—ILLUMINATIONS.—BALL AT THE EMBASSY.—THE SULTAN.—CHIEF OF THE EUNUCHS.—A BEAR AT THE BALL.—ESPINU'S ENTHUSIASM.

Orta-kioy, February 8th, 1856.

My dearest Mother,

GOING to a ball from a village near Constantinople is a very different thing to going to one in England, as you may suppose. Edmund had directed our two caiquejees to be ready by four o'clock, to take me in to Pera, but by noon a tremendous north wind came rushing down from the Black Sea, and the Bosphorus was soon lashed into fury.

Of course a caique was now quite out of the question, even to me, who glory in a good rough sea; so, after a short consultation, Vassili sallied forth into the village in search of an araba, or teleki, and after an immense amount of bargaining and disputing, the dilapidated affair (which we had often seen moulder-

ing in a ruined outhouse) was announced as likely to be ready to take me to Pera within half an hour.

After many difficulties, my Spanish dress was finished to perfection. The difficulty, of my little Greek maid being too young and too pretty to be left for many hours alone in a palace, was got over by Mrs. Barker most kindly offering to lend one of her servants. Espinu was highly delighted, and an object of the greatest envy to Nicoletta and the rest of the servants in the dark-red Turkish house above us.

Espinu speaks only Greek, of which I know but a few words, so, as you may imagine, I should have infinitely preferred Nicoletta, who speaks Italian. However, if not useful to me, Espinu was at least highly ornamental. She is really a very handsome woman; and all her little finery was displayed on this occasion. A dress of bright-green silk and gold bracelets, a fez on her head, with the thick purple tassel combed down all over it, and bound round by two immense plaits of splendid black hair, a gaily embroidered handkerchief round her neck, very prettily put on,—in fact, quite a saint's-day toilet.

How I laughed when the crazy telcki came to the door! Imagine a very dirty, tawdry, diminutive Lord Mayor's coach, or a halfpenny edition of Cinderella's pumpkin, with two most wretched white horses tied to it by a strange entanglement of lea-

ther thongs and rope. A "charm," of blue and red beads, against the "evil eye," hung round the neck of each of these poor animals, whose appearance certainly was far more likely to inspire feelings of pity than of envy. "Are we to carry the horses, or are they to carry us?" said I to Vassili, as I stood with the magnificent Espinu at the gate. The Greek driver laughed heartily on this being translated to him, but declared that his cattle would do the journey well. Having got the vehicle, the next difficulty to be overcome was how to get into it. No step, no door! I saw with dismay that Espinu and I (neither of us at all in the fairy style) must inevitably take a flying leap through the window, which was obligingly opened for us. I ~~must~~ say that my heart rather misgave me for a moment, especially as I saw the Armenian bishop's eyes gleaming through the opposite lattice; but presently taking shame to myself that an Englishwoman should quail at anything, and invoking the spirit of the clown I had seen so cheerfully risk his neck in the last pantomime, I tucked up my petticoats as high as consideration for the Armenian bishop would permit, and one spring from the loose stone at our door settled me comfortably on "all-fours" at the bottom of the teleki, with no other injury than a slight knock on the head. Espinu was still more fortunate, for her husband,

Nicola, came down to see her off, and giving several efficient "shoves" in the midst of his adieus, she was soon packed by my side.

Vassili then put the portmanteau and Edmund's cocked-hat-case and sword upon the opposite seat, the Greek driver seized the tattered reins, yelled in the most frightful manner at his horses, and off we started.

Jolt No. 1 knocked our two heads together; No. 2 nearly sent us through the glass in front; No. 3, down came the cocked-hat-case into my lap; No. 4, down went the portmanteau upon our feet. At first we tried to recover the things and put them into the seat again; but some fearful swayings to and fro and bumpings in going down the hill, soon made us regardless of everything but holding fast, and saving our heads as much as possible.

The shaking we suffered was really something frightful. Every now and then you think that nothing can possibly prevent the whole concern from toppling over. You say to yourself, "Is it possible that we are going over those enormous stones, or round that frightfully unprotected corner, or through that sea of mud?" You think, "Well, we must be over now!" but crash goes the painted, crazy thing, destitute of springs, over immense holes, then perhaps over half-a-dozen huge, loose paving-stones, again wallows into another

hole, feet deep in mud, and then hangs all on one side, like a fly on a precipice; the horses being frequently twisted round, so that you cannot see them or the driver, who is generally on foot and hanging on to the reins somewhere. Our carriage had however once been very gorgeous, a deliciously barbarous representation of the Bosphorus being daubed over its roof, and yellow satin curtains festooned round the door-window; this, being intended for the shrouding of Turkish beauty, was so cunningly and jealously contrived, that we had to stoop very low to look out. The guards at the Sultan's palace stared, as they always do, to see an Englishwoman in a teleki.

It was a very fine day, and all Beshicktash seemed abroad. I suppose the Sultan was making some presents, for I saw several black slaves coming out of the palace with trays upon their heads, covered with embroidered muslin, just as they were in the days of the Arabian Nights. By the fountain was a great crowd; and among noisy and laughing Greeks and the usual motley groups one sees so constantly in this country, the Turks were even condescending to look interested at a little spring-cart containing three French soldiers, *en route* to the French camp at Mashlak. I really think that I was as delighted to see this triumph of civilization and springs as the admiring crowd who shouted after it. We had a cart

here the other day, by the bye, and the whole village was in a state of commotion. I rushed to the window to see what it was all about, and felt proud of my country when I beheld the vehicle with its perfectly round wheels winding its way with comparative facility over the ruts and stones of our village road.

Notwithstanding, however, our shaking, we reached Beshicktash without any accident of moment. Here I noticed a charming little store of pottery, which I intend to visit some day, and spend no end of piastres in. The vessels of clay in general use are really charming, from the monster and griffin style, which is manufactured at the Dardanelles, to the classical and elegant shapes which still hold oil, wine, and water for the Greeks. I intend to bring home an immense hamper of these: few of them cost more than three or four piastres. I was greatly taken with the huge oil-vases, and thought instantly of Morgiana and the Forty Thieves: they are quite large enough to hold a man. It is a delightful thing here to find that Time has not swept away all the pretty things of the Arabian Nights. Even the large silver basins containing covered dishes and plates, cups, etc., which the Geni brings on his head to Aladdin, are still to be seen, and bought.

The tomb of Barbarossa exists in an excellent state of preservation in this village. Very near it are two

huge Roman sarcophagi. The Turks care not a straw for "remains" or antiquities of any kind, so no care whatever is bestowed on either. I shall endeavour to bring home a good sketch of these interesting tombs, but fear that the inscriptions are too much erased for even the learned in such matters to make anything out of them. It was most pleasant, on nearing the Sultan's new palace, to find ourselves rolling smoothly over an excellent road, with a cause-way for foot-passengers, an avenue planted, and lamp-posts all ready for the gas which is to come: all honour to Abdul Medjid! What a relief it was to leave off clinging like cats or monkeys, and to sit still and look about us like rational beings! The Greek mounted the rickety piece of wood pertaining to the driver, Vassili placed himself complacently by his side, the white horses were got into an almost even trot, and it is difficult for you English people, spoiled with every comfort, to imagine the enjoyment which that small piece of road was to all of us. Espinu kept laughing with delight, and crying out "Buono! buono!" I tried to make her understand that in England all the roads were like this: but although she was very polite about the matter, it was quite evident to see she could not "take it in." When we came to the new palace, "Dolma Batche," as it is called, there were between twenty and thirty

caparisoned horses standing by the beautiful white marble gateway, through which you see the waters of the Bosphorus, and a lovely glimpse of the hills beyond. A crowd of veiled women, lame, halt, and blind, were dispersing. These always haunt the Sultan, both when he goes to mosque, and when he pays his almost daily visits to Dolma Batche, to watch the progress of the building. A Turkish officer rides close behind the Sultan, and this "official" carries a bag filled with small silver coins (gold on great occasions), and a portfolio to receive petitions, which can only, and as a matter of precaution, be presented to the Sultan by women. These are frequently seen catching at his stirrup, at least when they can approach near enough. You may suppose what a scramble there is for the silver, when it is thrown. The Sultan has a very kind heart, and always makes one of his retinue see that the blind are cared for first of all. When he receives a petition, he hands it to the officer of the portfolio, whose business is to read it and subsequently to place it before the Sultan if worthy of notice, returning a civil answer to those which are not. This office, like all that is theoretically good in Turkey, is sadly abused. It is not very often however that such abuses are discovered, or, if discovered, punished; but the following instance is worthy of record.

A few months ago a gross act of injustice and oppression had been perpetrated on a Turk, either by a Cadi or a Pasha, I do not remember which, and it does not much matter, for one is generally about as bad as the other. The poor Turk, on the verge of ruin, with no hope of either law or justice, except such as might spring from a direct appeal to the Sultan, found means to present a petition : it met with no reply. After some time he ventured upon another, but that, and a third also, remained unnoticed. Had the Turk been friendless, no doubt his petitions would have been forgotten, as many sad ones had been before, and his cry for mercy would never have been heard in this world ; but fortunately he had a friend who was on intimate terms with a Pasha. The Pasha found an opportunity of mentioning the three petitions to the Sultan, who had never seen one of them, the officer no doubt having been bribed by the offending party not to place them in his hands. It was afterwards found that he had done this on many occasions, and had refused a favourable answer from the Sultan to those who could not afford him a "bakshish." The Sultan behaved as well as he always seems to do on those rare occasions when he hears the truth : he saw justice done to the poor Turk, and dismissed his officer. This you may rely on as perfectly true.

After passing Dolma Batche the shaking was more terrible than ever. The road takes a sudden turn up a tremendous hill, and is formed of what we call kerbstones, thrown down in the middle of a field. Half-way up the ascent, the river is like a scene of enchantment: the Sultan's white marble palace, the glittering Bosphorus, the Asian hills, the cypress-trees, and minarets of different villages, lie below you; and when, by great good luck, your teleki has arrived at the summit without toppling over, the Sea of Marmora and the mountains in the distance, and, nearer, the beautiful cliffs of Scutari, charm you completely into forgetfulness of the shaking and bruises which you have received. Below, to the right, a cheerful glimpse of a new road which the Sultan is making from Dolma Batche quite into Pera, may be caught. This approach to the town will be an immense comfort to all, especially to Europeans. The inspection of this road, and of the progress which is being made in his New Palace, seems to be the Sultan's only pleasure and delight. Edmund often meets him riding rapidly back to Beshicktash, to avoid the dusk of the evening, with his poor, ragged, badly-mounted Lancers clattering after him.

But I am afraid that I am a very wandering letter-writer. I was at the top of the hill, with the glittering sea before me, and on it many ships of war,

and the usual wild-looking Greek feluccas, and flights of snow-white gulls, when I stopped to tell you about the Sultan's new road from Dolma Batche. A few more jolts over still larger and looser stones, brought our carriage suddenly into the thick shade of the cypress-trees of the "Grand Champ des Morts." What a vast place it is, and how truly magnificent are its funereal trees ! You know those large poplars in Weybridge churchyard : fancy the effect of a forest of such as these, with innumerable turbaned stones,—some slanting forward, some upright, some fallen on the ground,—beneath these huge bare stems. The eye follows with awe many a winding, rugged pathway through this silent forest of the dead, and is sometimes startled by seeing a moving turban gliding slowly away in the distance ; for these pathways lead to various parts of Pera, just as the different roads in our parks lead to different parts of London. As I told you in a former letter, the Pera side of this cypress-wood is much frequented, and is untidy, dirty, and noisy; but on this side, all is as silent as, according to our ideas, Eastern sepulchres should be ; and a veiled Turkish woman stealing noiselessly along, or telling her beads on an ancient wayside stone, as I saw one, adds to the solemn beauty and impressiveness of the scene. Many of the stones seem to be of great antiquity ; the inscriptions, in bas-relief, are rapidly

crumbling away, and the carved flowers and leaves are almost obliterated, even under that thick and constant shelter. But every now and then you come upon a fresh and splendid group, which is almost startling in the sombre light, and the hush around you. I saw several painted a brilliant blue, and richly gilt. A family party looks extremely well, with the white-turbaned husband-stone at the top (of a square flag-stone); and the lady-stone, shorter, and fashioned into something like an upright leaf, at the bottom ; with perhaps three or four demure children-stones, ranged on either side in their little turbans : but I must bring home a sketch of Preziosa's. He has a most exquisite one, of a group of these tombs, in the midst of which a lamp is burning in the deepest cypress gloom ; and has, it is said, never been extinguished for more than three centuries. What travellers have said of women having no monuments, you see, is not true. There are quite as many women's stones as men's, both here and at Scutari, and in all the Asian villages where I have been. Sometimes there are two or three of these leaf-shaped women's stones in a family group, generally having a rose or a pomegranate-flower carved upon them, but they never of course have either turban or fez. By the bye, the modern red fez, with its purple tassel, looks very ugly amid the fine turbans of the olden time.

Suddenly emerging from these ancient cypresses and monumental stones, and finding yourself in all the noise, bustle, dirt, and confusion of Pera, gives one the sensation of having overstepped three or four centuries. From thoughts of ancient Byzantium, and of the long rule of the Osmanlies, brought most forcibly before the mind by these solemn acres of turbaned-stones representing them, three lurches of your teleki place before you the whole story of the present war. English, French, Sardinian, and German officers and soldiers are seen at every turn, and loud are the fraternizing songs which burst every now and then from the khans, or cafés. It is very amusing to note the look of quiet amazement with which the Turks regard the noisy merriment and enthusiasm of our soldiers and sailors. They calmly puff on, in their cloud of smoke, while Jack is singing or speechifying at the top of his voice, forgetting that not one word of his eloquence is understood by his wondering neighbour. It is curious that Jack can never rid himself of the idea that foreigners could understand what he says to them if they only would. "Come, don't be disagreeable" (in the most persuasive tone); "let's be jolly!" accompanied by an affectionate pat on the back, is a favourite way of "coaxing" some magnificent Turk into mirth and conversation.

There was a stir of quite an unusual kind in Pera,

on the afternoon of the ball. People looked more inclined to loiter, and were more curious than usual. The Greeks were conversing in groups; unusual numbers of troops were moving about; trays of bouquets were being rapidly conveyed hither and thither; sedan chairs were evidently in great request, no doubt for the purpose of paying frantic visits to late milliners or dawdling dressmakers; and mounted Pashas, looking graver and more important than ever, forced their way along with their usual train of pipe-bearers and cavasses, only just betraying the slightest possible touch of the "flurry" and excitement in which the whole of Pera was plunged.

When I arrived at the palace, Mr. Doria (one of the attachés) was finishing his inspection of the illuminations, which had been entrusted by Lady Stratford de Redcliffe to his care. The words, or rather names, of "Abdul Medjid" and "Victoria" were to greet the Sultan's eyes, hanging as it were on air across the court. The Turks excel in this mode of illumination at the feasts of Bairam and Ramazan, linking minaret to minaret by wreaths and devices of lights. The whole of the palace was brilliantly illuminated. The courtyard was a blaze of light, and lined with the Horse and foot Artillery and two companies of Grenadiers and Highlanders. I had just finished dressing when the roar of cannon began, announcing that the

Sultan had left his palace at Beshicktash. Mistress Espinu was quite frantic as to her chance of seeing the Sultan; and being constantly employed in climbing up at the windows to watch for him, and at the same time to admire the illuminations, she was certainly of no very particular use to me. Most fortunately an Italian was in the palace, who dressed my hair beautifully, and, having been in Spain, adjusted my mantilla and damask roses to perfection. This was certainly a most exciting moment; the cannon roared away, and every one was on the tiptoe of expectation. In a few minutes the guns left off firing, and then I knew, by the band playing 'God save the Queen,' that the Sultan had arrived. As to Espinu, she was so excited with the illuminations, and the cannon, and the soldiers, and the music, that I wonder the Sultan did not tumble over her prostrate form on his entrance.

The Sultan had, with very good taste, left his own Guard at the Galata Serai, and was escorted thence to the palace by a company of English Lancers, every other man carrying a torch. Lord Stratford and his Staff, of course, met him at the carriage-door, and as he alighted, a communication by means of galvanic wires was made to the fleet, who saluted him with prolonged salvos of cannon. Lady Stratford and her daughters received him at the head of the staircase.

Then, after the usual royal fashion, his Majesty retired to one of the smaller drawing-rooms to repose himself a little after his jolting. I never shall forget the splendid scene when we entered the ball-room. Anything more beautiful it would be difficult even to imagine.

Lady Stratford de Redcliffe, in a costume of the early part of the reign of George III., was standing about the middle of the room, surrounded by and receiving a most brilliant throng. Her crown of diamonds, her powder and pink roses, became her well. Miss Canning was dressed in the flowing white robes and oakleaf crown of a Druidess; Miss Catherine, as Mary, Queen of Scots. Mr. Odo Russell, first attaché, looked his ancestor, the Lord William Russell, to perfection. His dress was black velvet; a white plumed hat, fastened with brilliants; a point-lace collar; and below that a splendid collar of diamonds. Mr. Doria was an Exquisite of Queen Anne's time, in a purple velvet coat, lined with figured satin; diamond shoe-buckles, snuff-box, and everything perfect, from patch to bow; Captain and Mrs. Mansfield in most tasteful dresses of the same date; one longed to pop them under glass cases, one at each end of the mantelpiece. It would take me a day to enumerate half the costumes. But every one who had been to the Queen's *bals costumés*, agreed that

they did not approach this one in magnificence; for besides the gathering of French, Sardinian, and English officers, the people of the country appeared in their own superb and varied costumes. The Greek Patriarch, the Armenian Archbishop, the Jewish High Priest, were there in their robes of state. Real Persians, Albanians, Kourds, Servians, Armenians, Greeks, Turks, Austrians, Sardinians, Italians, and Spaniards were there in their different dresses, and many wore their jewelled arms. Some of the Greek yataghans and pistols were splendid. Two Jewish ladies were almost covered with diamonds. There were Fakirs, and Pilgrims, and Knights in real chain-armour, and Dervishes, and Maltese ladies, and Roman Empresses, English Shepherdesses, and Persian Princesses, and Turkish ladies without their veils. Of course there were also the usual oddities of a fancy ball. There was a Negro king, dressed in white and red feathers, and two gentlemanly Devils in black velvet, who waltzed with their long forked tails twined gracefully under their arms. Italian Bravos and Princes, Spanish Dons and Brigands, were of course plentiful. In fact, every costume in the known world was to be met with : Queens and shepherdesses ; Emperors and caiquejees ; Crimean heroes ; ambassadors, attachés, and diplomatists. The flash of diamonds was something wonderful, especially among the Ar-

menians and Greeks, who pride themselves, when wealthy, on the splendour of their wives.

We were noticing and admiring all this, and had shaken hands with M. de Thouvenel, and spoken to the few of the crowd whom we knew, when it was whispered that the Sultan was coming. Every one of course made way, and Abdul Medjid quietly walked up the ball-room with Lord and Lady Stratford, their daughters, and a gorgeous array of Pashas in the rear. He paused with evident delight and pleasure at the really beautiful scene before him, bowing on both sides, and smiling as he went. A velvet and gold chair, raised a few steps, had been placed for him in the middle of one side of the ball-room ; but, on being conducted to it, he seemed too much pleased to sit down, and continued standing, looking about him with the undisguised pleasure and simplicity of a child. He was dressed in a plain dark-blue frock-coat, the cuffs and collar crimson, and covered with brilliants. The hilt of his sword was entirely covered also with brilliants. Of course he wore the everlasting fez. There is something extremely interesting in his appearance. He looks languid and careworn, but, when spoken to, his fine dark eyes brighten up and he smiles the most frank and winning of smiles.

I am quite charmed with the Sultan, so different

to most of the Pashas by whom he is surrounded, so touchingly kind, and simple, and sorrowful! The Pashas behaved very badly, forcing themselves violently in a double row on the Sultan's right-hand, and pushing every one right and left, like policemen when the Queen is dining in the City; just as if they thought that the ladies were going to carry off the Sultan at once. We were close to the throne, and got a terrible squeezing. My lace mantilla was caught in a Pasha's sword, and I thought that nothing could save its being torn to pieces. However, Lord Dunkellin very kindly rescued me, and, thanks to his strong arm, I was able to keep my place and see Miss Mary Canning and the Ministers' wives presented to the Sultan. A quadrille was formed, as well as the crowd would allow, which the Sultan watched with great interest, and then a waltz. After that his Majesty walked through the rooms, took an ice, and then departed, expressing, I must not forget to tell you, the greatest admiration of the Highlanders and Lancers who lined the grand staircase, one on each step, and of the Light Dragoons and Royals, who presented arms to him in the hall: most of the cavalry men wore the Balaklava clasp. He certainly seemed much struck and gratified, as the papers say, at this splendid scene. Colonel Ebor, the 'Times' correspondent, was there, and saw everything, but

was obliged to keep a little out of the Sultan's sight, being attired in the magnificent dress of a Janissary Aga : this amused us very much. After the Sultan's departure the dancing was continued with great spirit. Mehemet Ali, Aali Pasha, the Grand Vizier, and most of the Pashas, remained almost to the last. The groups in the drawing-rooms were most striking ; and splendid knots promenaded the galleries. Sometimes the waltzers dashed out of the ball-room, and danced down the galleries, which seemed to please the Grenadiers and Highlanders stationed there excessively.

As I was walking through the rooms with M. and Madame Cretzolesko (Wallachians), we met the Grand Vizier. He conversed in French for some time with Madame C., and appeared to be very intelligent, and far livelier than the Turks are generally. He has travelled a great deal.

The Pashas eat enormously at a ball. They are for ever paying visits to the refreshment-room, and drink vast quantities of champagne, of which they pretend not to know the exact genus, and slyly call it "eau gazeuse." The English papers talk of Turkish prejudices ; generally speaking they have none, either religious or political, unless it suits them. The word "prejudice" means their dislike of anything which will prevent their living in splendour on the misery and oppression of the people. They drink champagne

and brandy, and defy the laws of the Koran, comfortably enough, in secret. I must except your real Turkish gentleman, a strict Mussulman, who is seldom heard of now, and never mentioned in the same breath with “reform” or European manners. It is curious that among the Turks the rich represent the bad; the poor seem almost invariably to be honest, temperate, patient, hard-working, and religious. A poor man here has a strikingly noble countenance; you may know rich ones only too frequently by the sensuality and ferocity of their expression. Here a man can hardly be rich and virtuous; if he keeps a place it must be by dishonest means, and so he goes on from bad to worse.

But to return to the “Sultan’s Ball,” as it is called. I must not forget to tell you about the Turkish lady who created quite a sensation there. When I first saw her, she was walking through the principal drawing-room, leaning on the arm of General Mansfield. She was veiled, and wrapped in a grey feridgee, or Turkish cloak, and appeared to be highly delighted at the scene. Many thought that some Pasha, or even the Sultan himself, had permitted some fair prisoner to view for the first time a Giaour festival, especially as all her remarks were made in the veritable Turkish tongue. As the evening however wore on, the Turkish lady’s timidity wore off, and at last

she began to behave with excessive levity, walking up to English officers and examining their stars and Orders, and looking up into their faces in the most bold and impudent manner. Then a spirit of mischief and fun seemed to possess her, and she had something cutting and sarcastic to say to every Pasha who passed by : " Ah ! you see we are coming out now. No more cages for us. We are going to see the world and judge for ourselves, and love whom we like. What fine tall fellows these English officers are ! I dare say they would be very fond of us, and not shut us up, and tie this foolish rag over our faces, as you do." You may imagine the tittering and laughing, as the Turkish lady's sayings to the Pashas got translated. She followed Mehemet Ali about, saying the most cutting and witty things, until the handsome Lord High Admiral hardly knew what to make of it ; nor were the rest of his Turkish Majesty's Ministers spared. It was certainly most cleverly done ; the walk, and every movement and gesture of the Turkish woman, perfect. At last however Fuad Pasha discovered in the fair dame the Hon. Percy Smythe, one of the attachés, who speaks Turkish perfectly well, and was thus enabled to beard the Pashas so successfully.

A most horrible-looking creature is the Chief of the Eunuchs. He is a Black, and hideous to a de-

gree positively revolting ; yet he is the second man in the kingdom, and the Sultan dares hardly go anywhere without him. He walked about leaning on the arm of a Negro but little less frightful than himself, their long swords clattering as they went. I am told that this creature walks about the Seraglio with a thong of leather in his hand, ready to strike any rebellious lady who may offend him. They say that the Sultan would be very glad to give up his Seraglio if he dared. He is much attached to the Sultana, the mother of his children, and seldom visits the seven hundred women shut up in the great cage near him. He has altogether seven wives ; the rest are slaves (principally presents) and attendants.

In the course of the evening it was whispered, "Soyer is coming at twelve o'clock with a bear." Accordingly, at twelve o'clock a door at the upper end of the ball-room opened, and Soyer, in a most effective Eastern costume, appeared, leading a monstrous brown bear by a chain. Two Greek ladies screamed ; but curiosity appeared to be the ruling passion, and poor M. Soyer and his friend seemed to run a pretty good chance of being squeezed to death in the splendid mob. By pushing a Pasha, and giving an appealing look to a Red-Cross Knight, gently elbowing my Lord Cardinal, and sliding beside a powerful Crimean hero, I managed to get an excel-

lent view of Bruin and his manœuvres. His antics were excessively droll and characteristic of his race, but his nose, with its too bright tint of carmine, betrayed him. That Persian Princess need not stand upon the ottoman ; those lovely Circassians need not tremble under their silver veils, the bear being nothing more nor less than a distinguished friend of the distinguished M. Soyer. I suppose there was some remarkable story attached to this skin, or the capture of the real gentleman who wore it. M. Soyer was trying to say something, but the laughing, tittering, and pretty terrors of the ladies rendered inaudible every word, and M. Soyer gained no laurels for his eloquence that night. He and his friend were escorted out of the ball-room by the Negro king, his Satanic Majesty, and the "familiar spirit" in scarlet and black, who each performed such diabolic dances and jumpings round them, that one began to think it was not very often they mixed with beings of this upper world.

When I left the ball-room, at half-past four, it was as brilliant as ever. One could never be wearied of looking, but I knew that this scene of the Arabian Nights must end, and I liked best to leave it in its glory,—the same splendid groups still conversing in Eastern languages, and resting on the sofas under the orange-trees, which, as I told you, Lady Stratford

has so exquisitely disposed in the drawing-rooms. Edmund and Herbert Siborne left me at the foot of the staircase. A few steps up was perched Mistress Espinu. She was in the highest state of delight ; had seen the Sultan both arrive and depart ; thought the English soldiers a thousand times “*bono* ;” never believed that there were such dresses and diamonds in the world as she had seen, or dreamed of such music, or of such a large house. The housekeeper had asked her to go down and eat (one of the housemaids was Greek), but the house was so large that she was possessed with the idea of never finding me again if she once let go the balustrades, or let out of her mind the way to my room. So there she had been all night, but was neither cold nor hungry. She told me that an officer with white hair and a “star on his heart” had come up the stairs about midnight. He spoke in English, and asked who she was, she supposed ; so she said, “Inglis Hornby,” and he nodded and passed on. This was Lord Stratford, who retired early. I made this out, partly from poor Espinu when I got to my room, shocked at her state of starvation, and partly when Vassili arrived the next morning with the white horses and teleki to take us back to Orta-kioy. She herself was highly delighted. The sight of the Sultan and the English officers seemed to have warmed and fed her even on

a cold stone staircase; and she will no doubt talk of the "Sultan's first ball" to the day of her death.

Everything was most admirably ordered; not a single accident nor the least confusion. The next morning we got home with some difficulty, a heavy fall of snow having taken place in the night.

At twelve o'clock the firing of cannon announced that the Sultan was passing, as usual, to mosque, even after the unparalleled fatigue of a ball. I was sorry not to have been at Orta-kioy, that I might have noticed whether (as is usual) the muskets were discharged at the palace at daybreak, and whether the drums rolled their summons to the Divan at that primitive hour.

## LETTER XXVI.

THE SULTAN'S DINNER.—TURKISH HOSPITALITY.—THE EMBASSY  
BALLS.—THE SULTAN.—ASSASSINATIONS.—THE WEATHER.

Constantinople, February 12th, 1856.

My dear Mr. Hornby,

You must not think that I have altogether discontinued my long letters, descriptive of Turkish manners, and of what we see and do. There are several reasons why you have not received such frequent packets. Firstly, I have been suffering severely from neuralgia; secondly, our usually quiet evenings have been much taken up by visitors; and thirdly, I have not been inclined to write at length. My pen however has not been idle, but working rather for duty than pleasure; but now that not a single unanswered friend remains to reproach me, and all the balls are over, and my tiresome neuralgia has taken its departure, you may expect to receive long communications as of old. I was extremely flattered and pleased to hear they amused you all so much.

We greatly enjoy the ‘Spectator,’ which generally arrives on Tuesday; so you may always imagine us on that evening, reading news from dear old England, in our little drawing-room at Orta-kioy; only remember we are nearly three hours earlier than you; when it is six o’clock in England, it is nearly nine with us at Constantinople.

The Turks are very primitive and sensible in their habits. We are near the palace, and at daybreak hear regularly the roll of the drums and the discharge of musketry which one reads of in the Arabian Nights. The Sultan dines in the middle of the day. About two o’clock there is always a crowd at the bottom of our village, as the Sultan’s cook sells the remains of his master’s dinner to any one who chooses to buy a “tit-bit.” I believe that no Turk (except porters and the like) is ever seen out after dusk, unless on urgent affairs. The French Ambassador dined with Aali Pasha, the Grand Vizier, the other evening, and slept at his palace, in accordance with the old Turkish custom, which never allows a guest to depart in darkness and danger from bad roads, or worse evils still. Lord Stratford always returns to the Embassy, however, not liking to sleep out. Almost all Turks, I am told, are in bed by nine, and always rise to prayers at daybreak.

You have no doubt seen, ere this, an account of

the two Embassy balls, at both of which the Sultan was present. The English Ambassadress's *bal costumé* was the most magnificent and picturesque one possible to conceive; it deserves a letter to itself, so I will send you a full account. Lord Stratford asked Edmund very kindly to be one of his Staff who met the Sultan at the entrance. It was a most interesting sight: the grand staircase was lined with Crimean troops, cannon thundered, and the band played 'God save the Queen.' The courtyard of the palace was brilliantly illuminated. "Abdul Medjid" and "Victoria" were hung in the brightest lamps across the darkness, after the Turkish fashion, which has a magical and beautiful effect. The Sultan has a benevolent and pleasing countenance, one that you like at once,—mild and melancholy, and exhibits a great contrast to those of the ferocious-looking Pashas about him. Sad to say, his troubles and distractions are making him drink champagne and brandy too freely, even for a Frank. He was much amused at the novel scene presented to him, and looked on with interest while a quadrille was formed before him. Edmund and I were close to his chair of state, and saw him plainly. But I must not anticipate my promised long letter. I was, if you care to know, a Spanish lady in a black mantilla fastened with beautiful damask roses.

Herbert Siborne was there, looking extremely well : he had been in Orta-kioy the day before, and could not find us out in the maze of irregular wooden houses. Edmund has just bought a horse to bring to England ; he is an Arab, and called "Sultan," at my express desire. Georgy, the Sais, now rides "Turkish Johnny." Well mounted, I hear to my comfort that a man is pretty safe.

There were twelve cases of stabbing last week at Pera ; two of the victims were Englishmen. A merchant whom we know had a dispute with a Greek ; that worthy said as he departed, "I'll settle you in the street !" The Scheschell immediately left his office, and got a couple of French soldiers, who marched the gentleman off to the Greek Consul's, where the charge was made against him, and he was locked up. If every one were to behave with the same promptness and decision on being threatened, no doubt the effect would be very salutary in stopping such cowardly attacks.

The weather here is lovely : there is a south wind blowing, and "white horses" are rushing up the Bosphorus from the Sea of Marmora. In the middle of the day the sudden heat is oppressive. The evenings are cold and sharp, and it is no doubt these frequent changes of temperature which makes this climate so trying. Should the wind change tonight,

we might have snow in a few hours, and be pinched with cold after having been quite faint with heat. I feel the confinement to the house very much, and long for the disappearance of the mud in the village, that I may get down to the Bosphorus in a morning. But everything with us ends in a deep sigh and "Oh, for home!" We poor mortals do not know what a thing is till we lose it.

It is a great comfort to hear such good accounts of Edie. Her "sayings and doings," as described by my mother, are most amusing. Mrs. Austin is quite pleased with her intelligence and fun, and says that she is extremely well behaved, which I was delighted to hear above everything else. I always send her little bouquets of artificial flowers for her doll, taken from sweetmeats at the balls, which afford great delight. The same lady received a Turkish handkerchief, covered with spangles, to serve as a shawl.

I must say adieu, the twilight fades into darkness so soon here, and I can scarcely see. Edmund will be home soon, and Vassili is ready to serve one of his nice little dinners.

## LETTER XXVII.

THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR'S BALL.—DINNER PARTY.—THE SULTAN'S VISIT.—FRENCH AND ENGLISH BELLES.—PASHAS AT THE BALL.—A FIRE.—A RUSSIAN PRISONER.

February 13th, 1856.

My dear Sister,

My last letter was full of the *bal costumé* at the English Palace. I must now just give you an idea of the ball which M. de Thouvenel gave to the Sultan last night. We took rooms at the Hôtel Bellevue, which is next-door to the French Palace, and we arrived there from Orta-kioy just in time for dinner.

It was a tremendous *table-d'hôte* of English, French, and Sardinian officers. Kiâni Pasha took me down from M. Cadrossi's room, to whom we had been paying a visit. M. Cadrossi is, as I dare say you remember, Edmund's French colleague. Kiâni Pasha is the Turkish Commissioner. He speaks Italian, and we got on admirably. He is rather nervous at

table, seeming in deadly fear of putting his fingers into the dishes, or doing anything else to shock Europeans. Rustem Bey was also there. He has learned to dance, and was anticipating the ball like a girl of eighteen. Our friend, the Vicomte di Negri, the Sardinian Commodore, sat opposite to us, and we were charmed to meet. It is very pleasant going into Pera from these savage parts, and stumbling upon all your martial acquaintance. It is also very odd to be the only creature of "womankind" in such a crowd : and one tries hard not to be proud at being fed and tended like an ibis.

The dining-room of the Hôtel Bellevue overlooks the French Embassy. At dinner I could see the Greeks crawling over roof and front, lighting the lamps for the illumination. It was soon a blaze of light, and the champagne and conversation had not made our immense party the less inclined for the ball ; so we soon broke up to dress. M. de Thouvenel had begged a particular few not to be later than half-past eight, as the Sultan was invited at that hour, although it was not generally known. Edmund was delayed a little, and my sedan-chair was nowhere to be found. After waiting for it some time, our patience was exhausted ; so I put on a cloak, and mounted my husband's goloshes, and we launched out bravely into the sea of mud. However, it was but

a few yards, and from the flambeaux and lanterns as light as day ; but there was such a crowd of arabas, horses, and sedans, and cavasses, and Greeks, that we could scarcely make our way through. The alley leading down to the Embassy from the street was lined with Zouaves and troops of the Line.

The soldiers from the different French regiments stationed in the Embassy garden looked magnificently picturesque by the light of the illuminations and glare of flambeaux. The hall, staircase, and lobbies were adorned with orange-trees and flowers, and lined with picked men of the finest regiments. We found the ball-room frightfully crowded. Every one knew this time that the Sultan was to be there ; so they were not to be cheated, and hundreds arrived even before the appointed hour. However, all were put out by his Majesty's having arrived quietly at half-past seven. Fortunately M. de Thouvenel was ready to receive him ; and I was glad that he did go so early, as he had an opportunity of looking at everything without being hunted. The crowd was really terrible, and when the Sultan left the drawing-room and took his place upon the raised seat, as he did at Lord Stratford's, he was literally hemmed in and stared at as if he had been a wild-beast. A quadrille was attempted, but could scarcely be said to be danced, so great was the pressure near the little

throne. The Periotes behaved very badly; and the Ambassador, in his anxiety to please everybody, had asked too many of them.

The Grand Vizier, the Seraskier, and all the Pashas of note were there; also the Chief of the Eunuchs, strutting about as usual. A splendid military and diplomatic gathering, of course. The Princess Stongia was there: she is said by many to be one of the most lovely women in Europe. I thought her very beautiful, dressed in snowy white, with a queenly tiara of brilliants. There is a great deal of good-natured rivalry among the French and English here, as to the respective beauty of the "Commissariat daughters," each of the Commissary-Generals having one perfect in her way, and possessing as many admirers as there are days in the year. I pronounce in favour of the English girl, who is as charming in a straw bonnet as in a ball-dress. It is very amusing to see half-a-dozen officers, with orders and stars, waiting anxiously while the beauty looks through her tablets, and then quietly tells them that it is impossible for her to "have the pleasure" that evening. "Is there no chance?" murmurs a disconsolate General. "Not the slightest," is the usual reply, with a merry laugh: for she is not the least conceited or spoiled, although in a fair way to become both. Then you hear an attaché say, "I

must go and try my luck ;" while a disappointed suitor remarks sulkily, " I tell you you have not the slightest chance." Both the " Commissariats" looked very lovely at each of these assemblies. Although not *costumé*, the French ball was very brilliant. The suites of rooms are not nearly so large as those at the English Embassy, consequently the crowding was greater ; but still it was a beautiful sight.

It is curious to see the Pashas walking from room to room, holding each other's hands just like schoolboys : this is a great mark of friendship among them. I was very glad of an opportunity of seeing the Seraskier, or Minister of War. He has a very fine face, and is said to be an honest man. (N.B. He is poor.) It was very interesting to watch the ministerial groups conversing on the different sofas, and to notice the quiet amazement of some of the Pashas at the waltzing. I cannot help thinking it a pity that they should have seen so much of this. It is too sudden a jump into the questionable amusements of what is called civilized life. I was particularly struck with one fine old Turk who, late in the evening, was watching the waltzers with anything but an admiring expression. Presently another Pasha came up, and evidently asked him what he thought of all this, for he shrugged his shoulders in an unmistakeable manner, as much as to say, " Is it pos-

sible that our gentle, veiled women will ever rush round in the arms of officers, like these?"

We left the ball at its height, at about half-past two. There was a splendid supper, but nothing to be got for the crowd. I was just falling asleep, and gradually getting stars and red coats, and the Sultan's kind face, and the Grand Vizier's sharp one, out of my eyes, when the cannon gave the alarm of fire. We are too much accustomed to count these seven surly guns to mind them, or the watchman's wailing cry afterwards. When we first came here, and the fire-guns were heard, I used to scramble out of bed and mount a chair, to see where the fire was. But you soon learn to hear them with indifference.

Tell dear Edie that a very pretty little cat sat upon my lap at breakfast, at the Hôtel Bellevue, on the morning after the French ball. An officer told me that Miss Puss was a Russian prisoner, a French soldier having saved her from the ruins of a house at Sebastopol, in which she was mewing piteously, taken her to his tent, and afterwards conveyed her to Constantinople, where she was presented to the fat, good-natured landlady of the Bellevue, who prizes her very highly, and with whom she has forgotten her former sorrows.

But my budget (for I find that this, as well as my former letter, will go by the same mail) is more than

full. It must be a family affair. I send it first to you, my dear Julia, as you said you wished for "particulars" of the balls. Mamma must be very dull alone, and this may amuse her, even if you think it unpardonably foolish, and impossible to get through.

Kind love to you all. Wish us home.

## LETTER XXVIII.

A MUSSULMAN LEGEND.

February 21st, 1856.

My dear Mr. Taylor,

As you are a lover of Italian poetry, I send you the enclosed 'Legend of the Maiden's Tower.' It is written by a young Servian gentleman in the service of the Porte. Let me have your opinion upon it. As the production of a foreigner, and as illustrative of the facility with which the different races here write in many languages, it is at least interesting. Certainly among the Christian subjects of the Sultan, the Servians, in education as well as morality, rank foremost.

KEZ KULESSI (LA TORRE DELLA DONZELLA).

LEGENDA MUSULMANA.

*Romanza.*

Dell' ampia Bisanzio sui bei minareti  
 La luna riposa suoi raggi quieti,  
 E s' alza dell' onda leciero vapor.

A piè dell' angusta romita isoletta  
 Folleggia col Bosforo mistabile auretta,  
     Temprando benigna l' estivo calor.  
 I neri capelli di perle intrecciati,  
 Su molli guanciali i fianchi posati,  
     Selima è rapita in dolce sopor.  
 Deh, placida dormi tranquilla innocente,  
 Vagheggi nel sonno tua vergine mente,  
     Immagine lieta di gioja e d' amor.  
 La veglano attente Circasse donzelle,  
 Quai forse mai l' Asia vidde più belle,  
     Del reggio serraglio tripudio e splendor ;  
 Da terzo alabastro in alto zampilla  
 Con grato sussurro un' onda tranquilla,  
     S' esala dall' ambra soave l' odor :  
 Ma dentro l' angusta romita isoletta,  
 Perchè del Sultano la figlia diletta  
     Qual giglio ne' boschi nascosa si sta ?  
 Rifulgon per oro le ricche pareti,  
 Il suol si fa letto di Persi tappeti,  
     Ma il cuor di Selima riposo non ha.  
 Appena scherzava sul tenero viso,  
 Delizia del padre, il primo sorriso,  
     \* Già il fato contava i brevi suoi dì :  
 Ch' a mezzo il ridente cammin di sua vita  
 Da serpe crudele morrebbe ferita,  
     Incognita voce predire s' udì,  
 E dentro l' angusta romita isoletta  
 Nasconde il Sultano la figlia diletta,  
     Che tenta dal fero presagio salvar.  
 Di santi amuleti circondale il seno,  
 Di mistiche note ricopre il terreno,  
     Superba meschita fa in voto innalzar  
 Ov' è del Profeta il corpo divino  
 Per arsi deserti ei va pellegrino,  
     Ma il fero presagio gli resta nel cor.

Quant' era prescritto innanz' il creato  
 Adempie severo l' immobile fato,  
     Del Ciel, della terra supremo Signor.  
 I neri capelli di perle intrecciati,  
 Su molli guanciali i fianchi posati,  
     Selima è rapita in dolce sopor.  
 Cui vide più vaga, più angelica faccia,  
 Più mitide collo, più candide braccia,  
     Più languida posa, più morbido piè ?  
 Ma dessa si scuote, sospira, si destà,  
 Da molli guanciali solleva la testa,  
     E pare ch' incerta ricerchi dov' è :  
 Sognava campagne per rose fragranti,  
 Sognava d' augelli armonici canti,  
     E limpide fonti e ignoti piacer.  
 Ah ! riedi a' tuoi sogni tra campi odorosi,  
 Tra limpide fonti e augelli armoniosi,  
     Che solo nel sonno t' è dato goder !  
 Rivolta all' ancelle che fanle corona,  
 Con voce che all' arpa simile risuona  
     Selima di frutta ricerca un panier.  
 Ah ! riedi a' tuoi sogni tra campi odorosi,  
 Tra limpide fonti e augelli armoniosi,  
     Che solo nel sonno t' è dato goder.  
 Dai colli fecondi dell' Asia vicina,  
 Cui serve di specchio l' azzura marina,  
     S' apprestan le frutta ch' incauta bramò.  
 Quant' era prescritto innanz' il creato  
 Adempie severo l' immobile fato,  
     Ne umana sventura giammai lo placò.  
 Sul chiesto paniere che l' agili ancelle  
 Portaron ricolmo di frutta novelle,  
     Selima distende la cupida man.  
 Qual grido il silenzio turbò della notte !  
 Quai voci di donne da pianto interrotte !  
     Lamento di morte quell' aura suonò.

Oh! invan nell' angusta romita isoletta  
Celasti, o Sultano, la figlia diletta,  
Da serpe ferita Selima spirò.  
Dell'ampia Bisanzio sui bei minareti  
La luna riposa suoi raggi quieti,  
E s'alza dall' onde leggiero vapor;  
Ma dalla propinqua romita isoletta  
Funesta sul Bosforo un'ombra si getta,  
E un gemito n'esce qual d'uomo che muor.

*Pera, Luglio, 1831.*

## LETTER XXIX.

SHEPHERDS.—FLOCKS.—THE GREEK LENT.—NEWS FROM THE CRI-MEA.—TURKISH CEMETERY.—THE VILLAGE OF ORTA-KIOY.—AN ARMENIAN BURIAL.—FUNERAL OF A CHILD.

Orta-kioy, March 16th.

My dear Mother,

IT is a frightful day, with a piercing north wind, and snow driving before it so thickly that one can only see the shivering Turks and Armenians cowering along when close to our cottage. The valley and the Bosphorus are quite hidden from our sight. .

The shepherds are bringing down the sheep and lambs from the hills. Their goatskin cloaks and caps look white and stiff with snow. The poor sheep look very miserable, but the goats are hardier, and skip along cheerfully enough. This mixture of sheep and goats reminds one forcibly of the Scriptures, as does the tender care which the shepherds take of their little flocks.

Pasturage and food is so scanty here that they lead

them about from hill to valley, and when the weather is severe, having no outhouses, they take them to the village. The “guide sheep” is a very pretty creature, tell Edith ; it is trained to follow the shepherd, having been brought up by him from a lamb, and it lies in the shepherd’s hut like his child ; all the other sheep will follow it, and it is really charming to see the motherly care it takes of them. By the side of our cottage is a road which leads to the hills, so I generally see them going from, and returning to, the village, night and morning. There is an open part of the ruins where a great many wild dogs congregate, and it is quite a pretty sight to see the “guide” go on a little in advance, look anxiously round, and then trot briskly on, taking a broad sweep, for fear of a sortie from the enemy.

The shepherd, in his cloak of goatskins, generally follows behind with a little rough bay pony, who carries in the large pockets of his saddle any lambs that may be hurt, or weakly. The shepherd has two large dogs on the hills, but they only seem used here as a defence from the wild dogs and wolves ; the pretty guide sheep taking the flocks in and out of the villages. My favourite, whom I watch so often, has got a little lamb, tell Edie ; he is black, with a white spot on his forehead, and a white tip to his tail : his mother is wonderfully fond of him. The kind shep-

herd carries him for her under his goatskin cloak, and every now and then she leaves her flock to jump up at her master, and peep in to see how her little one does. Sometimes the shepherd is eating his dinner of brown bread, and she takes a little bit from his hand, so gently, as the party wind up the hill. The young goats are full of fun, skipping about, and playing all sorts of tricks. They give the anxious, motherly little "guide" a great deal of trouble. Some of them are very large, with curling horns, and long, shaggy coats; but there is a smaller kind, of a golden bronze-colour, which is remarkably handsome, and reminds one strongly of those on Greek vases and reliefs. My favourite shepherd has a black assistant: he wears a dark-blue turban, and a stone-coloured robe tied round his waist with a piece of rope: he is exactly like that graceful South-Sea Islander of Captain Cook's, whom Reynolds painted, and on whom Cowper wrote some beautiful lines. I forget the name (Omar, or something like it, I think), but you will know whom I mean. You may easily conceive what a picturesque party my friends are.

The day before yesterday was the first day of the Greek Lent, their New Year's Day being on the 13th of ours. At about mid-day the old watchman chanted some religious verses for the day, at the door of each Christian house. Everybody in the village, rich and

poor, took the Sacrament,—caïquejees, porters, street-sellers of sweets, etc.,—the little road was quite crowded. At daybreak every morning you hear the summons of the Greek and Armenian churches. Their masters, the Turks, will not allow them to use bells, so they strike an iron bar with another piece of iron, and make a noise somewhat like them, but very curious to the ear at first.

The Greeks keep Lent very strictly. All the village go to church at daybreak every morning, and the fast is exceedingly severe. They tell me that we shall soon see every one look starved and miserable, nothing being allowed but soup, little better than water, and an occasional piece of black bread, just sufficient to sustain life.

The sun, never long absent here, has just burst out. The Asian mountains opposite, glittering with snow, look very beautiful. At first I thought they were white clouds. Adieu !

March 18th.

I am writing my letter to you this evening, as tomorrow I have an invitation to go with Lizzie James's friend, Madame de Fitte de Souci, to visit a Turkish harem. It will be a great treat, and I will write you a full account.

We have just heard that Peace is proclaimed. It

will give great joy to those who have husbands, sons, and brothers in the Crimea. I had a long letter from the Camp last week. Our troops are in splendid condition, amply provided with everything, and full of ardour; the French suffering severely from want of food and clothing, and we are now repaying, a hundredfold, what they gave us at the beginning of the war.

All the snow is gone, and the weather here lovely, although the wind is still in the north. My days are passed pretty much in the way which I described to you in a former letter, and the principal amusement of many solitary hours is noting all that is new and interesting to write home about. This morning the Sultan's eldest son rode past our windows; the caparisoned horses and guard of Lancers following looked very pretty winding up the hill. I dare say they were going to visit the French camp at Mashlak, from which we constantly see both soldiers and officers riding or walking past to the Bosphorus or villages about. Rude carts, drawn by white oxen, are often urged up the hill by savage-looking Croats, who beat the poor animals most cruelly. A rich Armenian is building a house on the top of the hill, and the huge paving-stones of his courtyard are fastened by ropes on to these primitive and groaning vehicles. The necks of the poor oxen are fixed in a kind of yoke,

which sometimes wounds them severely. I can no longer bear to look at this spectacle of cruelty and barbarity, and turn my head from the window whenever I hear the sound of the creaking wheels, and the savage shouts and blows urging the poor patient creatures along.

There are many sad sights from my window, as well as novel ones. Halfway up the hill above us is a small Turkish cemetery, enclosed in a low stone wall. There are not many tombs in it, and no carved or gilded ones, but the place is shady, and the turf always soft and green,—a very rare thing here. Even in this quiet and secluded place,

"Where the wild cypress waves in tender gloom,"

headless Janissary-stones still tell the story of Sultan Mahmoud's vengeance.

There has been no Turkish funeral since we came here. They bear their dead rapidly by in a covered bier, at the head of which the fez is hung. The body is placed in the grave sitting upright. The grave is not filled up, and a stone is laid above it. This is because Mussulmans believe that the good and evil spirits, Moukir and Nekir, visit the grave on the first night, and question the departed as to the good and evil which he has done in life. A lamp is left burning for this solemn party, and the dark cypress-trees wave

gloomily above. One can fancy their solemn wail over sins unforgiven, life's duties undone.

The Greek and Armenian burial-ground lies higher up, on a green slope, planted lovingly with planes, and many other light and pretty trees; here people sit in the summer evenings, thinking on those beneath, and gazing quietly on the fair prospect spreading far and wide before them. I notice here many family groups, graves of fathers, mothers, and little children, with often a raised piece of turf, shaded by a tree evidently constantly watered and tended. The other morning a broken bough, weeping over two tiny heaps of daisied mould, was carefully bandaged up, and the turf around it soaked with water. This care and love is very touching. There is something most pleasing in seeing a villager, on a sunset evening, quietly sitting in cheerful communion, as it were, with dear ones gone.

The village of Orta-kioy lies thickly clustered in a broad valley, with a hill on each side. Opposite to that nearest to Stamboul, on which we live, and where I sometimes sit of a morning, in the Greek burial-ground of which I am writing, lies the bleak and dreary resting-place of the Jews,

“Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast.”

The countless stones have neither form nor inscrip-

tion, merely masses of rough unhewn granite or marble thrown down on the ground, with here and there some resembling broken columns. Nothing can be more desolate-looking than this gaunt and rugged hill. It looks so typical of the despised and despairing race, and of their ruined kingdoms. Sitting there, I often chant over the Hebrew lament:—

“ But we must wander witheringly  
In other lands to die,  
And where our fathers' ashes be,  
Our own may never lie.  
Our Temple hath not left a stone,  
And mockery sits on Salem's throne.”

All these different peoples pass by my window to these their last resting-places. It made me sad at first to see them, but now the pale uncovered faces do not haunt me, as they did, for hours after. Sitting quietly, alone, you hear something like a deep-toned, distant hum, accompanied by a shrill one, just as if myriads of giant humble-bees and myriads of thin-trumpeted gnats were coming up the hill together. The first day I heard this, I could not conceive what it could be. “*Un morto viene*,” (“There is a dead man coming,”) said Vassili from the garden. Just then the procession wound round the high walls of the Armenian house, chanting as they came. First, six or eight boys, in richly embroidered robes, and carrying small waxen tapers;

then priests, in still richer vestments of velvet and gold, bearing lofty gilt crucifixes, and swinging censers ; then, on an open bier, looking calm and placid, but just a little, little weary, a fine young man, dressed as for a gala day, the bright fez contrasting strongly with the pallid brow. A rich and soft cushion pillow'd his head as tenderly as perhaps it had often done on his own divan ; a robe richly trimmed with fur wrapped him to the feet ; his hands were folded naturally on his breast ; he seemed reposing on a pleasant bed, life's weary journey over.

The bier was spread with shawls, and at each end the little arch of woodwork, wreathed with leaves and flowers. Friends, not walking two and two, but pressing lovingly round, alternately bore the burden slowly up the hill ; for it is steep here, and they cannot hurry on, after the fashion of the East, which arises from a belief that the soul is restless and unblessed until the last rites are completed. So I have a full view of the pale and regular features, and at first feel startled and shocked by so unusual a sight. Afterwards I feel that to my mind it is better and less barbarous than our formal funeral etiquette of black feathers, "mutes," and white handkerchiefs pressed to the eyes, whether there be tears or not. Here it is not incumbent on near and dear relatives to attend ; so that those who do go, do not affect a

degree of grief which they are not supposed to feel. The women usually take a last adieu within the walls of the house, tearing their hair and garments with loud lamentations, after the fashion of the East.

Passing an Armenian house the other day, a bier was carried out; the women had thrown open the lattices of the windows, and were gazing sorrowfully down on the procession, but were perfectly silent in their grief. The chief of the hamals of our village died one morning when we first came here, and was buried a few hours after. He was an Armenian, and old; so they dressed his bier with ripe fruits, instead of flowers; bunches of golden oranges, rich-coloured pomegranates, and clusters of pale lemons in their dark green leaves;—for were they not falling in the autumn, and gathered in, as he was, ripe in the harvest-time? He was very much beloved, so no heavy burdens were carried that morning, and crowds of hamals bore him on his last journey up the steep hill, where doubtless he had often toiled and panted in the burning sun. Now he rested right royally in his holiday robes, and with soft shawls tenderly wrapped about him. Hands which will never bear a heavy burden more, are folded gently on his breast, clasping the golden cross of the Armenian Church. Tenderly his friends crowd around him, vying with each other to bear him swiftly on to happiness and

perfect rest. The sweetest air of repose is on his face, that kingly Eastern calm which is so beautiful among the very poor.

The next that came was a bride, with a wreath on her head, and with long threads of gold floating around her bier from the rich dark masses of her hair. I watched her sorrowfully from my window; for she was so young, the very breath of life seemed to hover on her smiling features still, and the long shadowy fringes of her closed eyelids to quiver in the morning sun, as if gazing on the flowers folded in her hands. It was hardly possible to believe that this was death.

But one morning,—I shall never forget that day,—I heard, at a distance, the droning hum of the priests, and, putting by my work, looked out. I thought that an unusual noise accompanied the chanting, something like the jingling of a child's coral. And so it was; for on a cushion, the rich crimson of the velvet contrasting with the lily-whiteness of the face upon it, lay a beautiful baby of about ten or twelve months. It was exquisitely dressed, in snowy robes, as if for a christening, and freshest flowers in its tiny hands and all around it. In the lace rosette of its cap, a little golden cross was seen, and the cherished coral by its side rang out at every step of the Armenian who carried and hung over the cushion as tenderly as if hushing the little thing to sleep. A veiled woman

looked on from a distance, following the procession slowly up the hill ; I thought it might be the nurse, sorrowing and lingering about. Oh, that sweet baby-face—that touching requiem of its coral, how it made my heart ache ; thinking of the last pale one that I had so grieved over but a few months before ! I sat down and thought my heart would break.

I had been out of spirits all the morning, thinking of the thousands of miles, the seas and mountains, which divided me from Edie and you all. So, as you may suppose, I could not forget this little child. All night I thought of it in its little grave, with the lamp burning by its side, and its coral bells in that cold dreary place ; its poor mother mourning at home for the first night without it. How many things bring a dark day back again in the life which is just beginning to brighten up ! It was a long time before I could feel cheerful.

## LETTER XXX.

VISIT TO THE HAREM OF RIZA PASHA.—NEWS FROM ENGLAND.—  
LADIES OF STAMBOUL.—CHIEF OF THE EUNUCHS.—INTERIOR OF  
THE HAREM.—DRESSES OF THE LADIES.—CIRCASSIAN BEAUTY.  
—DRESSES.—HOSPITALITY IN THE HAREM.

Orta-kioy, March 20th.

My dear Lady Easthope,

By ten o'clock on Monday morning, Madame la Vicomtesse de Fitte de Soucy, Mrs. Brown, and I were skimming along the Bosphorus as fast as three splendid Greek rowers could take us, on our way to visit the Harem of Riza Pasha. We landed at Tophana, and, guarded by the wisdom and sagacity of Vassili, reached Mysseri's in safety. Here we met M. Robolli, the Pasha's friend, who was to escort us, my husband being too busy at the Embassy.

The streets of Pera were crowded with loungers, five or six deep on each side, which rendered them almost impassable. It was the first day of the *Catholic* Greek Easter, and the Greeks seem to like no-

thing better than to block up the streets by staring at the English and French. It is really hard work to get along in such a crowd, and over loose and dirty paving-stones.

This morning, in addition to the holiday-making Greeks, a string of camels, led by a Turk in a green turban, and a diminutive donkey in a necklace of blue beads, stalked solemnly through the crowd, heavily laden with bales of wool. I do not think I have told you why the donkeys leading the camels are always so small. It is because in crossing a deep ford, the little fellow has to ride over on the back of one of these "ships of the desert :" his weight is therefore of consequence.

Mysseri's was as full of bustle as usual. Captain Haviland, the Queen's Messenger, had just arrived, and all were pressing round him for news from England. He had had a dreadful passage : for two days the ship had been beating about, unable to make the Port of Malta.

Almost all were grumbling at the news of "every prospect of peace." Numbers of officers have just arrived fresh from England after leave of absence, and all our people seem in such splendid trim, and to be so much at home in this part of the world now, that they feel indignant at being prevented from startling the whole universe with their "deeds of arms."

Nobody believes in the good faith of Russia: least of all the Turks. Our Commissariat here is at last in perfect working order: there are immense stores at Scutari and Kulalee, ready for the Crimea or elsewhere at a few hours' notice. Admiral Slade says that our naval power just now is something wonderful. I don't wonder at many of our fine fellows who have got new commands being disappointed.

However, we said good-bye to our friends at Mysseri's, stepped each into a sedan-chair (painted on the back with two comical-looking British lions shaking hands in the most violent manner), and with M. Robolli, mounted on a gallant grey, as our escort, hurried uphill and downhill in the steep side-streets of Pera. Our stout Armenian chairmen hurried the three sedans through still more crowded streets, over the Bridge of Boats, and soon into the silent regions of Stamboul, where veiled women were stealing noiselessly along, and the closely-latticed windows and high walls gave one an idea of a vast convent. Many of these dark-eyed ladies had a veiled black slave behind them, carrying small baskets of hyacinths, jonquils, and other flowers, from the flower-markets. At last, after interminable windings and turnings, we arrived at the half-open gates of an immense courtyard, surrounded by a wall which would have graced a castle of old. I almost expected to see a

horn hanging at the gate, with the challenge of the giant within, written in letters of brass. However, M. Robolli rode in without interruption, and the three sedans followed. Some Turks mending the pavement, stared at us with great curiosity: I dare say they thought the Pasha had bought three English wives.

We were set down in a large circular hall, covered with matting, and were immediately surrounded by numbers of the Pasha's retainers, principally cavasses (a kind of free-lance footmen) and chibouquejees (pipe-bearers). These gentlemen were entertaining themselves with a most minute inspection of us, when down the vast staircase (with two flights, *à la Fontainebleau*) came the Chief of the Eunuchs, as hideous and as angry as a Black could possibly be. He dispersed the mob right and left, evidently claiming us as Harem visitors. M. Robolli was conducted with us as far as the first suite of rooms, and he then retired to the apartments of the Pasha, leaving us in the hands of this "bird of night," who was now joined by two others, scarcely less monstrous and frightful than himself. These led us through several immensely large rooms, all covered with a rich gold-coloured matting, and with crimson divans at either end. No other furniture, except an occasional cabinet, filled with grotesque china, which I should have

liked to stop and look at. The ceilings were all carved and painted barbarously enough, and more or less richly. There were no doors, but heavy hangings of crimson embroidered cloth and tapestry at the entrance of the numerous apartments.

At last our conductor stopped on the third and last floor, which is always the principal in Turkish houses, on account of the view. He lifted up the crimson arras, and with a hideous grin invited us to enter. Madame de Souci and Mrs. Brown, who are both very new arrivals at Constantinople, were rather nervous, and begged me to go in first. I had seen how sweetly gentle and kind the Turkish women are, and lifted up the charmed curtain with much more confidence and pleasure than I should have entered an assembly of Englishwomen. I shall not easily forget the sight which presented itself. We were in the midst of a vast apartment, with a lofty, dome-like roof, carved with gigantic wreaths of flowers and pomegranates. An immense staircase was on the other side, lighted by a window which reached from roof to floor, and in the projecting half-moon of the balusters was a beautiful white-marble fountain. The whole was covered with the same gold-coloured matting. Rich crimson divans under each enormous window at either end, and raised three steps. The window looking towards the streets of Stamboul was latticed, with

round peep-holes; but the other was free from even a blind, and the beautiful blue Bosphorus and Sea of Marmora, with many stately ships upon them, the mountains in the distance, still glittering here and there with snow,—and nearer, the dark cypresses, and the minarets of Santa Sophia and numerous other mosques, lay in a grand picture of quite inconceivable beauty below it. Here, evidently in a dreamy kind of reverie, sat the principal wife of Riza Pasha, surrounded by her slaves, some sitting on the steps beneath the divan, at her feet, others laughing together and strolling about. She rose as we approached, and gave her hand, after the English fashion, to each. The slaves all crowded round to look at us, and I assure you that the variety and brilliancy of their costumes was almost dazzling.

But I must first tell you the dress of the great lady. Her selma, or wide-sleeved under dress, (trousers, etc.) was of a delicate violet-colour, bound round the waist by a richly embroidered scarf; her shirt of silvery Broussa gauze. Over this was a magnificent jacket of amber-coloured cashmere, lined with the richest sable. On her head she wore a fez, bound round with a large plait of hair, which was fastened every here and there with immense rose-diamonds. A purple lily-flower was stuck straight down this plait, and shaded her forehead. Her earrings were

of a single pendant emerald, set in a small spray of brilliants. She must have been of surpassing beauty, and was still strikingly handsome, with perfectly regular features, and skin dark but clear, a brow and upper-lip which would have graced a Roman Empress. Indeed we made up our minds at once that it was a Roman Empress she was like.

Rising, she motioned us to follow her, and the principal slaves officially lifted the hangings of one of the numerous doorways surrounding this immense apartment. We entered a charming room, evidently a Turkish boudoir, with an immense window, divans all round it, and the same enchanting view. Here we three poor Englishwomen sat in a row, distressingly anxious to converse and make ourselves agreeable, and knowing about a dozen words between us, including the detestable "*bono*" and "*no bono*," which we were heartily sick and ashamed of. I tried Italian; Madame Riza shook her majestic head; Madame de Souci murmured a few graceful words of thanks in French; at which Madame Riza solemnly uttered the word "*Oui*;" and all the slaves, black men included, laughed with joy and pride at their mistress's accomplishments. This was accounted for by Riza Pasha having been Minister at Vienna, and his speaking French.

The hangings of the two doors were constantly

being lifted, and more women as constantly trooping in to peep at us. Some giggled and ran away ; others advanced boldly up the room, and evidently spoke to their mistress about us. Some sat themselves down cross-legged at the further end of the room, staring at us to their heart's content, and talking about us in whispers. We, meantime, were talking to each other about them. But presently a splendidly dressed black slave lifted the arras, and behind her appeared a most lovely young Circassian lady, who was, as we afterwards found out, the Pasha's second wife, and a present from the Sultan. She was very tall ; but it is impossible to describe her winning beauty, or the exquisite grace of her movements. We were all three instantly charmed with her, and no longer regretted their not understanding English ; it was such a pleasure to exclaim every now and then, "Oh you pretty creature!" "Did you ever see such a figure?" "Do look at the shape of her head and throat." "What a lovely mouth ! and just listen to her voice." "There 's a plait of glossy hair ! quite down to her feet it must be when unbound !" This pretty creature, whom we instantly named "the fair Circassian," seemed to be on excellent terms with her majestic colleague. They saluted each other after their usual fashion, and she bowed to us very gracefully when we rose to do her honour, saying something which

seemed to be a welcome. I must now tell you her dress. Her trousers, and the robe which twists round the feet, and trails behind, were of the most brilliant blue, edged with a little embroidery of white. Her cashmere jacket was of pale lilac (like the double primroses), lined with a gold-coloured fur. A delicate lilac gauze handkerchief was twined round her head ; among the fringe of which, diamond hearts-eases, of the natural size, glittered on golden stalks which trembled at the slightest movement. Lilac slippers, embroidered with seed-pearls, completed her toilette. No, I must not forget the shining plaits of black hair which escaped from the handkerchief and hung down behind, and a diamond of enormous size and great beauty, which glittered on one of her white fingers. We decided that this must be a present from the Sultan, and that it must also be one of the stones spoken of in Eastern fairy lore as “lighting the chamber,” etc.

The two wives now began a little consultation, and from the word *chibouque* being frequently mentioned, we easily understood the question to be, as to the propriety of offering them to us. Both Madame de Souci and Mrs. Brown declared that they should die in the attempt (they are both very delicate) ; but I, having been taught by no less a person than the Chief of the Bashi-Bazouks, declared that I

could take five or six whiffs, not only with resignation, but with pleasure. However, we were not put to the test, for it was evidently decided in the negative; and on the principal wife clapping her hands, some richly-dressed slaves brought in trays of conserves, and water in crystal cups. On the first tray is a glass vase of the conserve, with a beautiful silver basket on either side of it, one of which is filled with spoons of the same metal. You take a spoonful of sweetmeat, and then place the spoon which you have used, in the empty basket on the other side. Then another slave presents you with a richly-cut cup of water. After that the coffee-bearers enter. One of them holds a tray of a semicircular form, from which hangs a magnificently embroidered and fringed cloth of gold. Other slaves then take the coffee and present it to each guest. The outer cup is exactly like an egg-cup; inside this, is one of the finest china, which contains the beverage. We admired their outer cups immensely; they were of richly-chased gold, encircled with diamonds about an inch apart and the size of a large pea.

After drinking coffee with great gravity and decorum, the empty cups being carried away by the other attendants, the principal wife again made an attempt at conversation; but after having thanked her, and said what a beautiful view it was, in pretty

decent Turkish, I came to a stand-still, although our gestures expressive of regret, were extraordinarily eloquent, I must think, for Englishwomen and children of the North. “Madame Riza,” as I must still call her, wanted to know if Madame de Souci was English (*Inglis*). She laughed and nodded; but still our hostess was evidently not satisfied, having no doubt heard the Vicomte spoken of as a Frenchman. We were sadly puzzled how to explain to her, but at last I held up two of my fingers, making them look as much like a loving couple as possible. One of them, I showed, was intended to represent Madame de Souci,—and touching it I repeated the word “*Inglis*,” they all nodded and laughed. The other larger and more imposing one, I touched with great gravity and respect, uttering at the same time the words “Adam (*man*), fez, *Français*,” or “Her man, her fez, is French.” If I had but known the Turkish word “*kòja*” (*husband*) then it would have been all right.

This making of signs was very vexing and tantalizing, and the fair ladies of Stamboul evidently thought so too, for they made signs to us again that it was very grievous to them. Thereupon arose another little murmured consultation; the slaves laughed and clapped their hands, and two or three of the principal ones rushed out of the room. We could not think

what they were about, and poor Madame de Souci became very nervous. "I hope to goodness they won't undress us," said she, colouring up, and every ringlet shaking with fright; "I was told that perhaps they would." "Never mind if they do," said I, laughing; "the room is very warm, and it would not hurt us. We must look out though that they do not divide our garments among them, and that they turn out these black men." Just at this moment, unluckily for the fears of poor Madame de Souci, our hostess made a sign to be allowed to look at her dress, which she pronounced to be "*chok ghuzel*"—"very pretty"; the fair Circassian then quietly lifted up Mrs. Brown's dress to look at her petticoats. Poor Madame de Souci certainly thought that the dreaded moment had arrived. "But they are such pretty creatures," said I, jesting; "it will be like being undressed by fairies."

So now the heavy arras was lifted once more, and the slaves who had just left, entered, bearing three magnificent chibouques, and two large shawls. Which of us was to be rolled up in them when stript of our decent European garments? But to our relief, yet bewilderment, the slaves threw the shawls over their mistresses, over head and all, so that they, holding the thick folds beneath their chins, only showed bright eyes and the least tip of nose.

We were excessively diverted by an old lady (an ugly likeness of Liston, in green trousers and jacket) wrapping her head and shoulders up with extraordinary care and anxiety. "Evidently something in the shape of mankind is coming," said we; "can it be the Pasha? That third chibouque is evidently intended for some one of consequence." "I suppose he won't offer to buy us before his wives." "I wonder if he is good-looking?" "I promised my husband to be home at four o'clock," said Mrs. Brown rather nervously.

All the young and pretty slaves had now disappeared, as silently and swiftly as so many mice, behind one of the hangings, and only the old and plain ones remained. Two huge black men entered, and stood, like sentinels, mute and upright, by a little white fountain in the recess. "What dangerous person is coming?" said we: "with no cashmeres to protect us, how are we to stand such a blaze of manly beauty?" We could not help laughing, in spite of ourselves, when again the curtain was lifted, and, guarded by another Black, entered the meek, white-whiskered little beau of seventy-five, our kind escort M. Robolli. After he had kissed the ladies' hands, held out to him beneath the cashmeres, we said, "O dangerous Giaour, pray don't stay too long, nor attempt to peep under that yellow and green handkerchief!" The old lady however seemed determined not to run any risk of

inspiring a hopeless attachment, for nothing but the tip of a rubicund nose was visible.

And now began an animated conversation. The presence of an interpreter was indeed a relief. And he took joyfully to the jewelled chibouque presented him, the ladies breathing out clouds of smoke in concert, and with a most wonderful grace. It was certainly a very striking scene,—the women-slaves standing and sitting around, in their bright and varied costumes, the Blacks watching our venerable Adonis and listening with the might of their enormous ears, and innumerable laughing eyes peeping from behind the arras, which was in a constant state of agitation. M. Robolli seemed quite to enjoy the state of excitement into which his presence had thrown the harem. He sipped coffee out of his jewelled cup, and evidently said many “obliging things” to the ladies, who received them very graciously, and then begged of him to tell us how welcome we were, and what pleasure our presence gave them, they touching their lips and forehead at the same time. We of course expressed ourselves very sensible of their goodness. They then begged we would take off our bonnets and make ourselves perfectly at home, which we did. They then asked us which we liked best, Stamboul, or London and Paris. I replied that Stamboul was most beautiful, but that at Paris and

London we had more liberty, and the streets were better to walk about in. Then a little murmur of delight from the slaves ran round the apartment: "She says Stamboul is most beautiful!" They asked how many children we had, and said that Edie's blue eyes and fair hair must be very pretty,—why did I leave her? I begged M. Robolli to tell them that I feared the variable climate, and also that she was left with my mother. "Don't let them think that we English are unnatural mothers." We all entreated this.

"Madame Riza" then said how sorry she was not to be able to present her own daughter to us. It seems that she is a lovely girl of sixteen; her health is usually good, but she is subject at times to fits of depression and nervousness, amounting almost to insanity. These attacks usually lasted about three days, and this was one of these distressing visitations. She was lying quite alone; her mind, the poor mother said, strangely wandering, speaking of places which she had never seen as if she were there. Her old nurse was the only person whom she could bear to see near her. The mother seemed deeply afflicted when speaking of her beautiful but unhappy daughter, who, M. Robolli says, is charming when well, full of grace and liveliness. While he was talking of her and condoling with the mother, whose whole counte-

nance changed to an expression of profound sorrow, the slaves sitting at her feet moaned and beat their breasts, and even the black men expressed the greatest sympathy : I assure you I saw tears in their yellow eyes.

It was impossible not to be much touched, in listening to this account of the beauty and gentleness and goodness of the poor young girl, alone in her misfortune, and seemingly beyond cure (at least here at Stamboul). Her mother looked the image of sorrowful despair, her lips trembled, and she could not utter another word. Wrapping her rich mantle round her, she sat in an attitude of queenly dejection, which Mrs. Siddons might have envied. These Eastern women are wonderful for grace. Of course we felt for, as well as admired her, and begged M. Robolli to say how sorry we were to hear of her sweet young daughter's affliction. She thanked us very earnestly and with a simple grace quite indescribable, a grace which makes you feel at once that you never beheld anything like it before. I said, "It is a very great sorrow for you, but there are others in the world still more unhappy : many who have lost all their children, and many also have ungrateful ones." She replied : "I often think that, and blame myself for giving way to so much grief. My child is good and lovely when she is well. I

still have her with me, and Allah may one day please to restore her health and mind entirely.” Here she puffed away vigorously at her chibouque, and, putting her hand on her heart, said that it was the very best of comforters in sorrow. We told her the story of poor Sir Edmund Lyons, losing his brave son just in the moment of victory ; and two or three even sadder still of this war. She said, “ How much England has suffered ! ” and several of the slaves cried.

We then changed the conversation which was becoming so melancholy ; and they spoke of their summer palace on the Bosphorus, hoping that when they removed there we should visit them. “ It is very lovely,” they said ; “ there are hanging gardens with a stream leaping from rock to rock amongst the orange-trees ; and the birds are always singing in the shade. There are also beautiful fountains, and rose-gardens ; and we think you will like it.” We were just saying what pleasure it would give us to visit them in their little Paradise, when a slave, richly attired, entered. She kissed the hem of “ Madame Riza’s” garment, touched her forehead with it, and then standing upright, with her arms folded over her breast, evidently delivered a message. “ Madame Riza” explained to M. Robolli. “ I am sorry to say I must go,” he said ; “ another Turkish lady is coming to pay a visit, and although Madame Riza admits me with her husband’s

consent, he being accustomed to European manners, any other Pasha might object to it ; and she would not risk getting her friend into trouble.” So off went M. Robolli, and off went the fair ladies’ cashmeres, and “Madame Liston’s” yellow and green handkerchief, and in ran all the pretty young slaves again, like a troop of fawns. I never saw so many women together in my life before ; there seemed to be no end of them.

There was one little girl of extraordinary beauty, about twelve, and another a little older, almost as lovely. I never saw any living being, or any picture, so beautiful as the youngest. They told us that she was a daughter of the Pasha, by a slave who died last year, and who was also very lovely. The wives seemed as fond of this little houri as if she had been their own child, and were quite pleased at our great admiration of her. Poor child ! I wonder what her fate will be.

While I was holding her little hand in mine, and looking at her lovely dark eyes with their deep fringes (you learn what “eyelashes” mean here), in came the belle, for whose sake M. Robolli was banished from the women’s apartments. Although not beautiful, I think she was one of the most striking persons I ever beheld. She had none of the almost invariable softness of the Turkish women, but a face

of the most marked talent and decision, and satire, and with a decisive authoritative manner to correspond, and yet perfectly courtly, and with that exquisite ease and grace which is so enchanting in Turkish women. She had piercing black eyes, of immense size and lustre, with thick eyebrows; and hair of so raven a hue that I instantly thought of the younger and more flattering portraits of Charles II. A large, dark mole on the somewhat sallow cheek, made the picture still more striking, and added to this she had tied a rich lace handkerchief round her neck, just after the fashion of a beau of the Vandyke school, the ends hanging down. She held a lighted Havannah cigar between her fingers, and we admired her rich lace and ruffles as she smoked with the air of a Rochester. Her dress and trousers were of amber-coloured silk, her waistcoat blue, embroidered richly in silver; round her slight waist she wore a many-coloured cashmere scarf, into which a massive gold chain and Turkish watch was comfortably tucked. Her hair was dressed in what they tell me is the old Turkish fashion, cut in steps, as it were, down the forehead; about an inch long by the parting, below that a little longer, by the ear longer still,—which has a very curious effect, and gives a rather masculine look. A light-blue handkerchief was twisted gracefully round her head, fastened on

with six or seven splendid stars of brilliants. Between the two centre ones, on the forehead, was a long piece of white muslin, about the breadth of one's hand, which, thrown back over the head, fell nearly to her heels behind. A ruby of enormous size flashed and glistened on the finger.

To us she seemed a striking "picture of the East," as she sat pleasantly chatting with Riza Pasha's wives. She and the chief wife sat, or rather reclined, on the divan. The beautiful Circassian seemed to feel cold, and half sat, half knelt by the enormous *mangale* (a kind of brazen tripod, filled with charcoal) in the centre of the room. I thought I had never seen anything more lovely and graceful, as she dreamily smoked her chibouque, and her great diamond flashed on her white hand, and she lifted up her head now and then to join in the conversation of the other two, or to laugh in the low, musical tone which had charmed us so much at first.

Our visit seemed very like a tale of the Arabian Nights, especially when the slaves entered with tambourines, and, sitting down cross-legged at the further end of the apartment, entertained us with a concert of "music." A more dreadful noise it is scarcely possible to imagine: you hardly know whether to laugh or to cry. A slave beats the tambourine, and leads the discord with her harsh and grating voice.

The rest take up the howl one after another, and yell louder and louder as the story which they are reciting progresses. The fair Circassian seemed to take especial delight in the performance, and, whilst searching for bright little bits of charcoal in the mangale to re-light her chibouque, kept prompting them with verses which they seemed to have forgotten,—to our great misery and regret; for ears, teeth, and hair were set on edge and bristling up the wrong way, at this excruciating “treat.”

It was at last put a stop to by two things: first, by Mrs. Brown’s sinking back on the divan, pale as death, overcome by the noise and the mingled fumes of charcoal and chibouques; and secondly, by the entrance of a very fine baby with his two nurses. He looked so odd to us in his little trousers and fur jacket, and wearing a tiny fez, ornamented with a loop of diamonds. This young gentleman belonged to the visitor lady, and stretched out his arms to her very prettily. He was not at all shy with the Turkish ladies, or with the slaves, but evidently considered us veritable “Giaours,” and would not come near us. The nurse who carried him was a lovely young woman: she was dressed in trousers and jacket of a bright green, and wore on her head a pale-yellow handkerchief, fastened with a large diamond. The other was an immense black woman,

dressed entirely in scarlet silk, with a little edging of white, and a snow-white handkerchief bound round her woolly head. These two "nurses" would certainly create a sensation in Hyde Park. They appeared devoted to the baby.

But now our imperial-looking hostess made signs that we were to eat, at which announcement we were not at all sorry, the fresh air of the Bosphorus having given us famous appetites. We followed her accordingly into the lofty apartment, with the dome-like painted roof; the fair Circassian leading me affectionately by the hand, and the Pasha's lovely little daughter gently conducting Madame de Souci and Mrs. Brown. The principal slaves went before to lift the arras, and a motley group followed behind. We could hardly believe the scene to be real: "It is so like an Arabian Night!" we kept exclaiming, as we crossed with the brilliant group over the golden matting of that vast apartment.

At the entrance of the dining-room stood two Arab slaves, richly attired. To each lady, as she entered, one of these held a beautiful silver bowl, while the other poured rose-water over her hands from a vase of the same richly-chased material. Two little slave-girls presented fine napkins, the ends embroidered in gold, on which we each shook the rose-water from our fingers. The dining-room was

a most luxurious apartment, closely latticed, for it looked into the streets of Stamboul, but cheerful, and rich in crimson divans and carved and painted flowers on walls and ceiling. All had been done that was possible to make the cage bearable. Riza Pasha's harem is, I am told, one of the most "fashionable," which accounted for our seeing a European dining-table, adorned with a handsome centre-piece, and four beautiful vases of flowers and fruit, after the French fashion.

The dinner-service was of rare and beautiful china ; the silver knives and forks were extremely handsome ; the *servietti* delicately fine ; the flowers exquisitely arranged, and mingled with oranges and lemons, in the Eastern fashion ; the slaves were standing round, three or four deep, awaiting our slightest sign : we felt still more in the land of dreams.

First of all they placed to each guest a sparkling water-bottle and glass. Then a fine china plate containing a flat roll of a kind of rye-bread, called *se-meet*, quite new and warm, and covered with a small seed, which, not being a canary or a linnet, I objected to. Then soup was served,—a great novelty in a harem : it was most excellent,—chicken and vermicelli. Then came a dish of pilauf, of chicken and rice, done brown. I sat next to the chief wife, on her right-hand ; as the slave held the dish, she

pointed out the nicest pieces, begging of me to take them. The fair Circassian sat opposite to me. I was curious to see if they really seemed to like the modern innovation of knives and forks. For the first few minutes they used them,—evidently to do as we did ; but the Circassian beauty, failing to secure the particular piece of chicken she coveted with a troublesome fork and spoon, threw those incompetent auxiliaries down, and grubbed successfully, and to her entire satisfaction, with her fingers. She then looked at me and laughed ; and showing me how to take a piece of bread between my fingers, begged us to eat *à la Turque*, which they were all doing themselves, fast and furious ; and, to please them, we accordingly picked a few chicken-bones with our fingers.

We had all three been enchanted with the fair Circassian, as I have told you,—with her beauty, her winning, yet lofty manners, and exquisite grace ; we had seen her smoke, and admired her still ; we had even forgiven her for loving the barbarous noise in the “concert of music :” but to see her lick her fingers up to the last joint after each dish,—to see her lick her favourite tortoiseshell spoon bright after successive, and never-to-be-believed enormous platefuls of sweet pancakes daubed with honey, and tarts too luscious for the Knave of Hearts !—this was too much for Venus herself to have done with impunity :

we were perfectly disenchanted long before the feast was over. The rest were not quite so bad (excepting "Madame Liston," who might as well have had a trough at once); but we began to feel rather sick after the first few dishes were despatched, and the animal passions of some of the ladies began to be roused by their favourite sweets and jellies, which they tore to pieces with their fingers, and threw down their throats in large lumps. The jester waited at table, presenting the principal dishes with jokes which caused bursts of laughter from the ladies and the slaves in attendance, who seem perfectly at home, and on very free-and-easy terms with their mistresses, notwithstanding their complete submission to them. The jester was a wild and most extraordinary-looking woman, with an immensity of broad humour and drollery in her face. We thought it quite as well that we could not understand the jokes at which the fair Circassian, between the intervals of licking her fingers and spoon, and popping tit-bits on our plates, laughed so complacently, and which sometimes obliged the Arabs and eunuchs at the door to dive under the arras to conceal their uncontrollable fits of mirth.

It was certainly a most singular dinner-party. The dishes of course were innumerable; the chicken and rice, and the *cabeb*, we enjoyed; the rest were very sweet, and very fat; and we were delighted when our

hostess rose, and again the refreshing rose-water was handed to us.

We then returned to the luxurious divan of the smaller room. Again the slaves handed coffee in jewelled cups; again the fair Circassian looked dreamy and lovely, hanging fondly over her chibouque; again we admired the blue Bosphorus, and the distant mountains, and the dark cypresses of Stamboul; again we asked for M. Robolli, and again the fair ladies were enveloped in their cashmeres; the Blacks standing mute, watchful, and listening. We repeated our thanks and adieus; the slaves lifted the arras. M. Robolli kissed the hands of the kind and veiled ladies. The Blacks conducted us down the broad staircase, crowding boisterously round us, and muttering something about *bakshish*.

Our visit to the Harem was over. M. Robolli mounted his "gallant grey," and rode back with us over the Bridge of Boats. It seemed as if we had had a dream.





